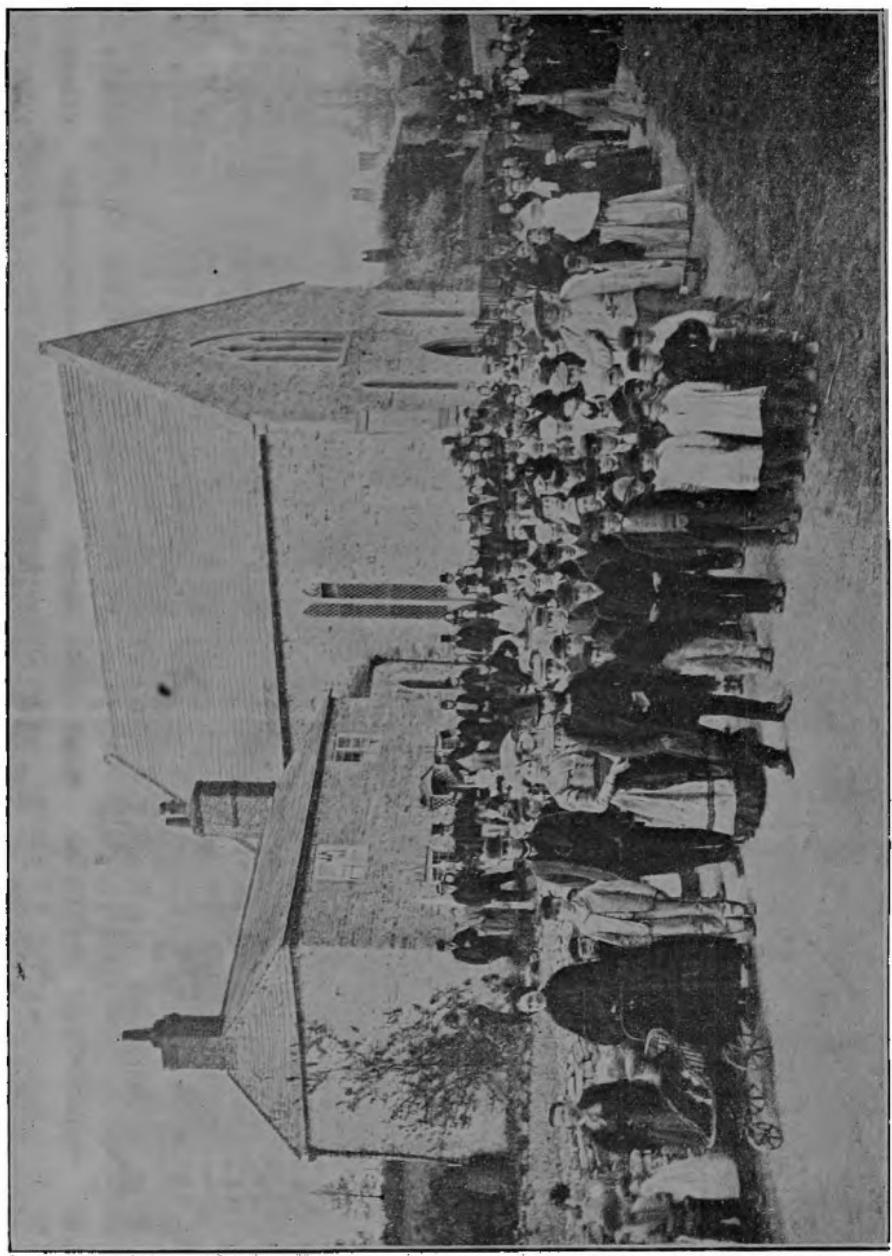


VICTORY IN THE VILLAGES

THE HISTORY OF THE BRINKWORTH CIRCUIT

W. C. TONKS

Brinkworth Jubilee Chapel and Congregation at the School Anniversary, May 1st, 1871.



Victory in the Villages:

THE HISTORY OF THE BRINKWORTH CIRCUIT

BY

Rev. William C. Tonks

*(The Superintendent, for the time being, of the
Brinkworth Circuit).*

WITH FIFTEEN FULL PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS.

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—
1907

IN GRATITUDE

TO

The Sunday School Teachers of
The Village Churches of Burntwood and
Chase Terrace,
In the Lichfield Circuit; and to those of
Mexborough, in Yorkshire,
Who led the Writer into the Life
that is in Christ,
This Book is Dedicated.

PREFACE.

IN sending forth this book, I have hope that it will be of use to the young people of Primitive Methodism in the Brinkworth and Swindon District. It will also give pleasure, I trust, to those still remaining who have fought the battles and rejoiced in the victories here recorded or suggested. Particularly do I desire that the book will form a text-book, that shall be used as a basis for fuller information which the veterans can give to the recruits.

It was written to place on record some things worth remembering, that were likely soon to be forgotten. I hope the book will be found permanently valuable for its chronological details and illustrated pages.

I have to thank many friends for placing so readily at my disposal old magazines, photographs, and personal reminiscences. The photographs of the chapels, and those of Messrs S. Riddick, C. Maslin, J. Sweeper, E. L. Gardner, Rev. T. Smith and myself have been done freely by Mr. J. Riddick, of Wootton Bassett, and have materially added to the interest of the book.

While it has not been possible to verify every fact stated, or date given, this has been done in nearly every case, and by reference to old magazines, plans, account books, minute books, biographies, etc., it is hoped that accuracy has been achieved.

PREFACE.—(*Continued.*).

The articles by Mr. T. W. Turner, of Newbury, son of the Rev. S. Turner, on "Pioneer Work in the Brinkworth District," in the *Large Magazine* of 1900, have been of great assistance, and where first hand information was not attainable the Connexional Histories by J. Petty and H. B. Kendall have been relied upon. Unfortunately the Circuit minute books prior to 1834 seem to have been destroyed, but perhaps nothing material has been lost, tho' additional light might have been gained therefrom.

Had the book been written ten years ago, in some respects it would have been better. Men and women were then living whose memories went back to the earliest times, and personal touches now wanting might have been added. This advantage, however, is our to-day: that we stand, as seers may see, at the dawn of a new day, and both the backward look and the forward look are more inspiring than was the case ten years ago.

My prayer is, that the book may cultivate a spirit of thankfulness to the fathers and to their God; and a spirit that shall lead to the highest consecration for the assaults on the gates of hell, which shall not withstand us.

WILLIAM C. TONKS.

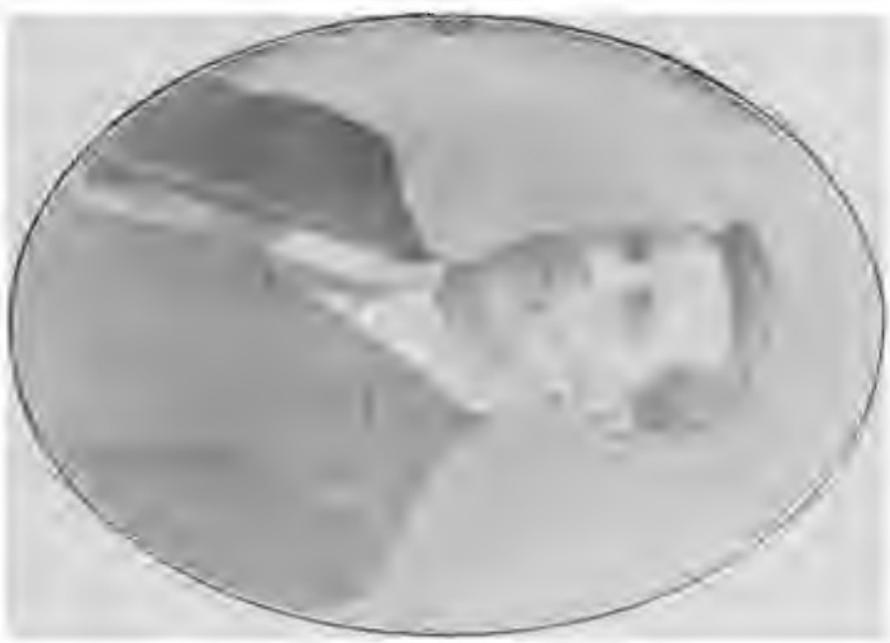
May 2, 1907.

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Mr. T. H. WESTON,
Circuit Clerk and Secretary



Mr. T. H. WESTON,
Circuit Clerk and Secretary



Rev. A. MARSHALL



Rev. W. C. TOMS

CHAPTER I.

Primitive Methodism.

PRIMITIVE METHODISM is referred to in a recent Free Church History* as an “influential and picturesque movement, which represents probably the noblest influence of to-day on the life of rural England.” It should be added to this that on the life of the mining and manufacturing populace its influence has been almost, if not quite, as powerful as upon rural life.

The landmarks of its origin may be given thus:

1. **The First Camp Meeting** in England, on Mow Cop, May 31, 1807. This was held with the reluctant sanction of the authorities of the Methodist Circuit of Burslem, with the hope that it would be the last as well as the first. The Meeting, described in the Connexional History,† was an unqualified success,

* By Rev. C. S. Horne.

† By Rev. H. B. Kendall.

and left the impression on William Clowes' mind that "myriads of saints and angels will everlastingly laud the Eternal Majesty on account of the day's proceedings on Mow Cop."

2. The Norton Camp Meeting, August 23, 1807.

This was the fourth Camp Meeting, and it proved to be crucial. Against it was definitely set the official disapproval, then official antagonism and finally the pronouncement of the Liverpool Conference that "such meetings are highly improper in England, and likely to be of considerable mischief; and we disclaim all connection with them." There is not the slightest doubt that Conference acted with the best intentions, but the result was that the Camp Meeting Movement was placed outside the pale of the recognised usages of Methodism. For the Camp Meeting was held. By Hugh Bourne the Mow Cop Camp Meeting was intended to be the first of a series, which should be held through the years as long as God required them and blessed them. Against all opposition he stood firm and saved the movement from extinction.

3. On June 27, 1808, Hugh Bourne was dismembered by the Burslem Quarterly Meeting, as his superintendent informed him, because he had a tendency to set up other than the ordinary worship. In other words, he was dismembered because he persisted in arranging for and taking part in the holding of Camp Meetings.

4. The First Class Meeting of "The Camp Meeting Methodists" was formed at Stanley, March 1810, and was taken charge of by Messrs. H. and J. Bourne as a separate Society, May 10, 1810.

5. In June 1810, William Clowes was expelled for the same reason as Hugh Bourne had been two years previously. Others were expelled with him. Separate Societies were formed, and what may be called the evangelising fraternity known as Clowesites came into being. Between the Camp Meeting Methodists and the Clowesites, the closest fellowship and co-operation existed from the commencement. A closer union was inevitable, and this was sought.

6. The First Class-Tickets were issued bearing the date May 30, 1811, but without a name given to represent the uniting communities.

7. Finally, on Thursday, February 13, 1812, the name Primitive Methodist was assumed.

Thus, in an attempt to recover the simplicity of primitive Methodism, Primitive Methodism came into being. Thence onwards to the present time it has maintained its originating spirit, and has proved itself to be an agency of God for promoting the Evangelisation of all whom it has reached. Though not without its ebbs and flows, as a whole and in sections, the tide of its life-giving influence has continuously risen, until to-day its adherents and

	Time	City	Engaged	Dist.	1st. Standard
9	9 16 20 30	14	2 25 4	//	10 2 1 Steel
1	Janetah Sand 6	1 2 4 7 5 6 2 4	9 5 1 6 4 2	5 5 1 4 Brown	5 3 1 Baum
Bagnall & Body Edge 6	13 1 11 5 9 4 12 3	16 15 6 13 14 7	9 6 12 Body	9 6 12 Body	
Stanley & Brown Edge 6	10 5 8 14 15 6 11	4 12 7 3 9 10	8 5 6 18 12 Mountain	18 12 Mountain	
Barber	3 9 12 9	4 7	5	9 10 11 12 H. Day	9 10 11 12 H. Day
Can Edge & Garter 4	14 9 8 7	6 13	12	15 12 H. Mathematics	15 12 H. Mathematics
				13. J. Steele	13. J. Steele
				14. J. Steele	14. J. Steele
				15. J. Steele	15. J. Steele

When it happens a preacher does not attend
an audience made to supply
of any other person he present whom the organist
wishes to speak, the wish of the congregation must
be complied with.

FASCIMILE OF THE FIRST WRITTEN PLAN
— OF THE COMBINED SOCIETIES. —

friends may with humble thankfulness point to the manifest and permanent influence which it is exerting upon the life of the nation and the race as proof of its Divine origin.

While, in 1907, the Bishops and Clergymen of the State Church are tardily speaking of giving Demos a place in the church, of which he ought never to have been deprived, this movement, from the commencement, has been a movement of the people, by the people, for the people. The privileged classes have been and are still, on the whole, its foes. Its frankly democratic system has most effectively attracted "the common people." Hugh Bourne and William Clowes, the former a wheelwright, the latter a potter, belonged to the same class socially as Jesus, the carpenter of Nazareth. The zeal of its devoted evangelists marks them out as in the Apostolic succession, of a truth, and Mr. Horne rightly describes their religious work as the most striking that the early years of the nineteenth century witnessed. Owing none of its success to men of commanding personality, its progress has been notable, and indeed remarkable. Its resources never included much wealth save the wealth of unquenchable zeal. Because of their love for the souls of their fellows, the evangelists, or to use a truer name, the preachers, both the "itinerants" and "the locals," unhesitatingly, and uncomplainingly went through storm and flood, thro' hunger, poverty, imprisonment

and the most brutal treatment, from those they sought to save. The pioneers were plain, honest, earnest men who daily imperilled their all for Christ's sake. No labour seemed too great for them, and between the "travelling preachers" and "the locals" there was no difference save in the *extent* of their operations and sufferings. William Clowes walked thirty-five miles and preached five times in one day, and William Rowles, of Wootton Bassett, still living and preaching, has risen at three o'clock on a Sunday morning and walked eighteen miles before breakfast to preach at a ten o'clock service, and has then continued his labours till the evening.

Their contemporaries were like them. Long journeys, and little food; often selling their possessions to pay their way; drenched in rain, lost on the road, shelterless at night; such was their common experience. But they won men to God, and that was their exceeding great reward. To quote Mr. Horne yet once more, "In the days of the foxhunting parson they were almost alone in caring for the souls of the villagers, or indeed in crediting them with souls to care for. Their reward was very commonly abuse and indignity and imprisonment. But if faith and love are the sovereign realities, they were men of high rank and noble worth. These plain, blunt, homely, self-educated evangelists of Primitive Methodism belong to the saints and heroes of England."

To-day, there is a Primitive Methodist Church. Through the years, from the disconnected Clowesite and Camp Meeting Societies, to a CONNEXION; through the phases of Circuit predominance and Districtism, the consciousness of Unity has developed. The limbs of the body are now well-articulated, and the life expressed is that of the whole rather than of its parts. Districtism especially died hard, and references to "Connexional" courts and officers are still made in tones of resentment or opposition, which will only cease with the coming of a new generation which has not known Districtism. Standing shoulder to shoulder with the other Free Churches of Great Britain, the Primitive Methodist Church strives earnestly to do its work. Gathering its membership in the twentieth century less exclusively from the poorer ranks of the people, its influence upon national life steadily grows. In politics, its group of ten Members of Parliament are found unitedly on the side of the forces that fight for Freedom for all, in all directions: Freedom in Religion, Freedom from Class Monopoly, and Freedom or Self-government for the Nations. Hugh Bourne, studying Greek "by the help of God" in the harvest field in the dinner hour, is a true type of the Primitive Methodist preacher. For a century mental culture has been diligently, yea, doggedly sought for, both for local preachers and the separated ministry. The now completed Hartley College at Manchester, the largest of its kind in the country, and thoroughly equipped is

alike a testimony to the past and a guarantee for the future. The minds of the trained ministry will everywhere facilitate the training of the local preacher both by stimulus and by actual contribution to his mental equipment. The Temperance Organisation of the Church reports for 1906, some 400,000 abstainers amongst our S. School Teachers and Scholars. The Christian Endeavour Societies number 2,144, with 61,219 Active Members, and 14,796 Associate Members. There are 4,133 Sabbath Schools with 473,837 Scholars and 60,691 Teachers, and with over 96,000 enrolled members of the Bible Reading Branches. The Book Room is a prosperous business concern, with an annual sale of publications of all kinds of over 3,000,000, and a good profit which materially aids certain of the funds of the Church. Chapel property is valued at £4,692,114, and the debt thereon is a little over a million pounds. Chapels number 4,509; other preaching rooms 617. The sittings therein provided are over a million, the number of churches centred therein is 5,126, and the total membership reported to the Conference of 1907 is over 212,000. The Missions of the Church, called Foreign, are found in Fernando Po., in the mainland of West Africa, opposite to which this island stands; and in South Africa, and South-Central Africa, and are prosperous and therefore increasing. The ministerial staff numbers 1,153, of whom 973 are in the active ministry, and there are 16,209 Local Preachers. The Chapel Aid Association, Chapel Loan Fund,

Extension Fund, and Insurance Company promote stability and constant aggression on lines dictated alike by sound business instinct and Christian Faith.

Thus, in the beginning of the Centenary celebrations, the Primitive Methodist Church stands. For it, we thank God. To God, through it, we offer ourselves for the service of man. In it, we stand and feel the thrill of a full tide of life that comes direct from its Divine Founder, and we gaze into the future with every hope that, at the close of the Centenary celebrations, at the close of the actual hundred years of its organised life, our beloved Church will show itself as in the very prime of manhood, alive unto God, clothed with the beauty of His Holiness.

Of the part taken by the Brinkworth Circuit in the making of our Church, and the work it still performs and will perform as a Primitive Methodist Circuit, let the following pages tell.

CHAPTER II.

The Circuit---as it is.

WHERE is Brinkworth? These words passed the lips of a distinguished minister recently when driving through the very middle of the parish. On learning that Brinkworth was a village of only about 1,100 souls, his astonishment was very great, but the contribution given to him for his work in London by the congregation which he addressed was quite satisfactory. His astonishment SITUATION. was surpassed, however, by that of the writer, when, in October 1889, he, then on the Reserve List, came down into "these parts" from Yorkshire. After anxious and vain search on the map for a railway station, he had to content himself with the conclusion that it must be somewhere near Purton, at which place he was to locate. As there was plainly a Brinkworth Circuit there must be a Brinkworth somewhere within it.

To-day Brinkworth has its railway station, on the Badminton route of the G.W. Railway, which branches out from the Wootton Bassett Junction. Its situation was anciently described as 92 mls. from London, 30 from Bristol, 24 from Gloucester, and 23 from Bath. Since the world is shrunk, travel is more common, localities are better known, and it may be described as being 5 mls. from Wootton Bassett, 6 from Malmesbury, and 9 from Swindon, on the main road between the two latter places. The Parishes of Wootton Bassett and Brinkworth join, and a straight line four miles long, drawn between the two chapels at these places almost divides the Circuit in half. A straight line drawn from Ashton Keynes or Cricklade in the north to Winterbourne Bassett in the south, measures about fourteen miles, and this long stretch of country averages about five miles in width.

The nineteen parishes within which the Circuit lies, have an area of about eighty-five square miles. Connexionally, it is bounded on the north by the Cirencester Circuit, east by the Swindon Circuits. To the north-east an extremity of the Farringdon Circuit is in sight, and almost in touch, but an area lying at this point between the five Circuits mentioned, requires, it would seem, to be remissioned by Primitive Methodism. To the west lie the Malmesbury and Chippenham Circuits, and Calne and Marlborough portion of the Hungerford Circuit are on the south.

The country thus indicated has its northern third drained by the upper Thames, and the remainder by the Bristol Avon. The northern ridge of the Marlborough Downs overlooks the whole of the Circuit, with the exception of two villages which lie on the southern side thereof. The rolling country viewed from that vantage ground, is good to

DESCRIPTION look upon. Well-wooded, with innumerable elm trees, in particular, bordering its roads and fields, with peeping cottages, houses and villages, the prospect is one of great beauty. It remains to be said that it contains only two small towns, Wootton Bassett and Cricklade, with monthly cattle markets, and in addition some sixteen parishes varying in population from 154 at Tockenham, to 2,500 at Purton, which has, indeed, the largest population in the Circuit. The whole population within the reach of Primitive Methodist service is about 14,000.

This number, it need hardly be said, is less than it was fifty years ago. Happily, there is every indication that the decline of the villages in this part of Wiltshire, is permanently arrested. If **POPULATION** the Land Reforms now before the **AND** country are effected, development rather than decline will mark the future. Meanwhile, the rise of Swindon into a corporate town of 50,000 inhabitants, provides a

constant market for the productions alike of the market gardener and the farmer. In addition, some five or six hundred men and boys from the Circuit area find employment in the G. W. Ry. Works there, and are accommodated by workmen's trains to Wootton Bassett and Purton, morning and evening. The farms are now almost entirely given up to dairy productions (milk and cheese), cattle growing, pig rearing, and the requirements of the market gardener, and general prosperity is manifest. Small holdings are common, small landowners are also, fortunately, increasing, and independence of all kinds shows a cheering growth. As to wages, it is here as elsewhere. Some farmers pay, as wages, as much as they can, and employ as many men as they can; others pay what they must, and employ only as many as they are compelled. The former rejoice in common with their "men," the latter grumble and toil till they've hardly time to pray. Farm laborer's wages vary from twelve shillings with house and garden, to sixteen shillings with similar additions. Marvellously thrifty are those who, on the former so called wage, can live in honesty and cheerfulness, and rear a family. Where health is vouchsafed it can be done and is done, but the advent of the gaunt spectre of continued ill-health has marked the doom of thousands, and they have in the past, died, crushed by inevitable poverty. Note the following, dated 1892. A general election is in progress, and our farm laborer is being canvassed by one who seeks his vote

for one who belongs to a “Party of Reform.” His reply is: “No, I shan’t trouble to vote this time.” “Why?” he is asked. “Well, I don’t think I shall ever trouble to vote again. I’ve done my best, and I’ve given it up as a bad job. Here I am; I get twelve shillings a week, and there are twelve of us to keep, none earning anything but myself, and twelve shillings barely pays for bread for us all. I’ve tried to be honest but I can’t. I’ve given up trying.” His death a year or two after was the result of starvation, shame, and failure, more than anything else. Thank God, times are mending, and for some, they need to mend, too, and that right early. In these days, there is once more hope for the farm laborer. God grant he may not again be disappointed. Meanwhile, let him do as thousands of Primitive Methodist farm laborers have done in the past—trust in God, preach a gospel of Brotherhood in Christ, and fight hard for his rights—his rights of manhood, and what is requisite to sustain it.

During the past decade the prosperity of the people has considerably increased, and in this prosperity Primitive Methodism has fully shared. Its members and congregation are drawn from all classes except it be Lords of the Manor, etc. These, we regret to find, have not yet come under its beneficent influence; but mechanics and labourers, tradesmen and schoolmasters, tenant farmers and

those who farm their own land are blessed by its ministry, and by the Grace of God serve their day and generation. This abundant service is manifest in all directions, for the Brinkworth Circuit Primitives have a mind to work, and are found in their places, all classes of them, in schools and pulpits, in council chambers and in the larger business of national politics.

The number of Churches of all kinds in the Circuit area is fifty-six, made up of twenty-two Primitive Methodist, nineteen Establishment, six Congregational, four Wesleyan, **ECCLESIASTICAL** and five Baptist. Thus, to a large extent, and especially as regards **MATTERS.** the Free Churches, "the country is ours." Hereabouts, the "Methodists" are the "Primitive Methodists," while the mother Methodist Church is known as "Wesleens," as it is often pronounced. The twenty chapels and two preaching rooms have sitting accommodation for 2,800 hearers, and save two or three of them, are very well attended.

The Chapels cost £8,800, including the two ministers' houses, and the total debt thereon is £576. The following is the list of places, with some statistics as reported March, 1907:

THE CIRCUIT—AS IT IS.

	Church Members	S. School Scholars	C.E. Members	B. of Hope Members
Brinkworth	... 42	... 52	... 22	... 15
Broad Town	... 28	... 30	... 11	... —
Wootton Bassett	72	... 70	... 30	... 44
Tockenham	... 32	... 44	—	—
Grittenham	... 22	... 27	... 18	... 30
Bradenstoke	... 17	... 20	—	... 20
Purton	... 91	... 126	... 30	... 130
Purton Stoke	... 76	... 106	... 15	... 57
Hook	... 15	... 58	—	... 19
Leigh	... 24	... 83	—	—
Ashton Keynes	... 9	—	... 13	—
Cricklade	... 27	... 38	... 12	—
Goatacre	... 30	... 41	... 23	—
Preston	... 7	... 24	—	—
Winterbourne	... 17	... 37	—	... 34
Bushton	... 23	... 36	—	—
Lydiard	... 43	... 80	... 23	... 41
Minety	... 32	... 35	—	... 60
Callow Hill	... 23	... 45	—	... 50
Braydon	... 25	... 23	... 19	... 30
Broad Hinton	... 21	... 28	—	—
Lyneham	... 9	—	—	—
<hr/>				
TOTALS	... 685	... 1003	... 216	... 530
<hr/>				

The workers supporting this are two ministers in active work, with a H.L.P. in winter; two super-annuated ministers, and fifty-seven local

Circuit Stewards.

—1861—



Mr. S. GANTLETT,
1861—1885



Mr. G. WATTS,
1885—1889.



Mr. C. MANSELL
(1891)—1902



Mr. J. SWEEPER
1902—1904

Mr. J. PARSONS, Circuit Steward 1904-6.



Mr. S. RIDDICK, Circuit Steward.



THE CIRCUIT—AS IT IS.

preachers, and a hundred and seventy-four S. School teachers, together with the local officers of each church. Occasional neglected appointments in pulpit and class, with disappointed congregations and scholars are painful reminders that the work is not done perfectly, but on the whole it is done heartily and faithfully. The Churches are located in excellent strategic positions. The parishes are large, quite a number of them reaching four miles in length, and the Primitive Methodist Chapel is, as a rule, then found placed in its own distinct "neighborhood." These "neighborhoods," and their occupation by our

POSITION OF CHAPELS. churches are quite a feature of the Circuit. They prevent undue collision with the State Churches, and avoid anything like overlapping. In the parish

of Brinkworth there are three of our churches; in Purton parish three; in Lyneham parish three; and the final and glorious result is that wherever the people's homes are found, a place of worship is within reach; and, now that churches have been established in Broad Hinton, and in the centre of Lyneham, there is not a single "neighborhood," or village, or hamlet within the Circuit bounds beyond the reach of the ministry of our church. Thus the country side is in our hands to serve and to bless in the name of God. The "Primitives" are everywhere, and everywhere the true "Prim." is a blessing.

Now standing, like the Primitive Methodist Church as a whole, firmly consolidated, relatively stronger than it has ever been in its own locality, the Brinkworth Circuit man is proud of his home, and thankful for a record of eighty years of service of almost unbroken success. Of how this has been done, and of the part played therein by some few of God's workers past and present, the following pages will tell.

Meanwhile the Circuit is bending its energies to the task of raising a contribution to the Centenary Fund of the Church of £1000. Such a task it is well able to perform, and is joyfully entering thereinto. When accomplished, this thankoffering will place the Work of God in a still more advantageous position in the Circuit, and it is earnestly sought that God shall so bless and help His people that the attempt shall be crowned with complete success.

CHAPTER III.

Eighty Years Ago.

PRIMITIVE METHODISM has always possessed movement. From its commencement it has, without pause, extended the area of its operations from year to year, and the cessation of labor in one direction has been followed by extension in others, as manifested in recent times by the separation of Australian Primitive Methodism from the British Conference, and the increased extension of our labors in Africa.

By the Conference of 1824, this onward march had reached all the Northern Counties, and strong Churches and Circuits had been established therein.

The Midland Counties had been well gripped,
1824. and southward Circuits were formed at Worcester and Cambridge, in the east at Norwich, and powerful Circuits also in Shropshire. The Membership of the Connexion stood at 33,507, and vigorous

efforts were being put forth in other directions than those just stated. Of special interest to our story is the fact that, in the year named, Societies had been established, though in weakness, at High Wycombe in Bucks, and in London. In 1823, the powerful mother Circuits, Tunstall and Scotter, had opened what was called the Western Mission at Tewkesbury and Stroud, and Blaenavon had been entered in the same year. Apart from these five places, in the whole of England lying south of a line drawn from west to east through Worcester and Cambridge, there was no Primitive Methodism.

With the successful development of that Western Mission our story has nothing further to do, save to note that it swept down the western side of Wiltshire, round the southern third of it, and through Dorset. Bristol was entered, but no secure foothold made therein until it was re-missioned by the Brinkworth Circuit some years later.

Thus, eighty-three years ago from the time of writing, North Wiltshire was untouched by the agencies of our Church. It is ours to describe

THE in this chapter the beginning of a work WILTSHIRE that has changed the moral face of the MISSION. country, not only in North Wiltshire, but thence, in particular, the counties of Berkshire, Hampshire, and parts of Gloucestershire, and Oxfordshire too. The work was begun by the decision

of the Shrewsbury Circuit to send Mr. S. HEATH to open a new Mission in place of one which had been relinquished in Wales. Mr. Heath, who had volunteered for this Mission, first preached at Cirencester. Here he was stoned and generally ill-treated. The country presented itself to his mind "like a field of unripe oats which could neither be cut nor fed," and he decided to pass on to the south, and over the border of the county into Wiltshire. Here he found a field which could be reaped, and he commenced the gathering in of a great harvest of souls. This was not done without opposition, nor without suffering, but, as will presently be seen, the results were immediate and great. Meanwhile we pause to consider the moral and spiritual condition of things, into the midst of which our Missionaries came, "led of the Spirit of God." They found that, from many miles of country, Evangelical Clergymen were entirely absent, and that few Dissenters were to be found. The Wesleyan Methodists had left this region almost entirely alone, probably because JOHN CENNICK, "the Evangelist of North Wilts," had perambulated it, and established

Societies therein at numerous places. But

JOHN John Cennick was Calvinistic in his CENNICK. teaching, allied himself to George Whitefield instead of the brothers Wesley, and the Churches he founded were Moravian, Plymouth Brethren, or Baptist. His soul was of heroic mould, his zeal and success were great, but lack of organisation made his work to be of a temporary nature. He

died in 1755, and from that date, the Societies he had formed in connection with the Moravian settlement at Tytherton, all declined, until the one at Malmesbury alone remained. A Baptist Chapel was built in 1777 at Clack by members of Cennick's family. But though the fruits of this heroic evangelist's toil seemed to pass rapidly away, there is no doubt at all that the good seed sown lived on ; and when, seventy years after his death, our Missionaries entered upon their task, that task was easier, the harvest was greater because of Cennick's work. Where he was opposed by blows they generally met with words ; or where they were faced with sticks, he had had to face swords. The rioting and cruelty of the Berks and Hampshire Missions afterwards endured by our fathers was not at all approached in the Brinkworth region of Wiltshire, and this preparedness to receive the gospel was surely the result of Cennick's zeal.

At what point in North Wilts any considerable impression was first made, it is difficult to determine, but into this region in the early part of 1824, Mr. Heath came. He found Brinkworth "proverbial for its wickedness; deplorable ignorance, glaring vice, and barbarous practices were predominant." Mr. Petty, who himself was a minister at Brinkworth, says that "such was the notorious wickedness of many of the inhabitants that for years it had been deemed perilous to ride through the village alone, and

from these ruffians considerable persecutions had to be endured." Clergymen of the State **BRINKWORTH** Church nowadays desire "inside facilitated" ties for religious instruction in schools at everybody's expense; but when our early preachers stood on the village green at Brinkworth, and the crowd sat on "his" churchyard wall to hear, the clergyman of that day objected to granting "outside facilities" to Methodist preachers, and from the graveyard angrily pushed the hearers off the wall, one by one. Many went to hear with their pockets full of stones to cast at the preacher. The preachers shot first with the arrow of truth, the stones were quietly dropped on the road instead of being hurled at the preachers' heads, and the persecutors sought and obtained pardon for their sins. A great moral reform swept over the place, persecution ceased, and the powerful Brinkworth Church was founded.

At Wootton Bassett, into the midst of the crowd gathered to witness the cruel pastime of "back-swording," Mr. Heath marched and preached "in

Mr. Petty, in his history, thus describes the practice of "backswording": "On a certain day in the year, strong, fearless men came crowding into the villages or towns, filling the streets, with large cudgels in their hands, to contend with each other for the victory. With savage ferocity they engaged in the contest, earnestly striving to break the skulls of their fellow-combatants. Fiendish yells, loud shrieks, horrid imprecations, and deep groans rent the air; and mangled flesh, broken bones, and pools of blood met the eye in every direction. In these savage encounters, many were maimed and otherwise seriously injured for life, and diabolical passions were inflamed in their minds."

solemn earnestness on death and judgment, heaven and hell." The constable haled him before the magistrate, but he was soon back again,

AT and duly finished his sermon. Many in WOOTTON Wootton Bassett were convinced of sin, BASSETT and also many from the surrounding villages. A powerful society was also formed here, and this town became a very strong centre of our church life. Nearly all the villages round were missioned in addition, of which the chief were Seagry and Brinkworth. The brutal game of "backswording" was quite extinguished by the gentle force of the Gospel of Love, and the praiseful songs of redeemed men were heard throughout the countryside. Many of the men who had carried stones in their pockets for the preachers' heads, became the most devoted local preachers and class leaders of the new societies, and now carried the Balm of Gilead for wounded hearts. Preaching generally "twice a day" the missionaries and the helpers they gathered went on from place to place. In January, 1825, Mr. Heath sent to Shrewsbury for another preacher, and Mr. Vaughan was sent. He was followed soon after by

Mr. Richard Davies, a man of great RUFFIANISM power and influence. At Malmesbury the opposition was very violent. AT MALMESBURY. People of rank and legal authority encouraged the ruffianism directed against our missionaries, by gifts of drink. The windows of the dwelling-house used for preaching

were repeatedly broken, although the place was duly licensed for preaching. Intestines of beasts and all kinds of filth were flung at the preachers and upon their hearers. For taking a Bible out of the hand of a preacher and dropping it into a pot boiling on the fire, one man was fined *one shilling and fourpence*. In contrast let it be noted that Rev. Thomas Russell, for selling ten pennyworth of literature to a policeman, without a pedlar's license, was sentenced to three months imprisonment in Berkshire. Such was the equality of magisterial justice in those days. At last Malmesbury had to be abandoned, not to be entered again by our Church until re-missioned in the fifties by Rev. G. Warner, of which re-missioning more anon. At Cricklade a society was established, though against strong persecution. For a time the members of society was hardly able to go into the streets, about their ordinary business, without being pelted with stones, but the church has continued to this day. "By the end of 1825," writes Mr. Davies, "the mission embraced the following towns:--Malmesbury, Chippenham, Wootton Bassett, Swindon, Cricklade, Cirencester, Calne, and Devizes, and all the villages of note round about, Brinkworth and Seagry being the first of them." In a number of these towns, however, as will be seen, a permanent lodgment had to be effected later. At Seagry, the first Primitive Methodist Chapel was built in 1826. Another was soon built at Broad Town, still standing, but turned into cottages, and known as the Chapel Houses.

Then came a "neat chapel" at Clack in 1828, and in the same year a fourth and more roomy chapel was opened at Brinkworth.

Meanwhile, between the Conferences of 1826-27, the Wiltshire Mission was made into The Brinkworth Circuit, and took over the Stroud FORMATION OF THE CIRCUIT. Branch of the Western Mission. The latter Conference appointed five preachers thereto, with Mr. Heath as superintendent, and including Margaret Cutler. The copy of the first plan printed at the end of the chapter shows some twenty-two places at which societies had been established and regular preaching appointments made. The places now in the Circuit and powerful, which are absent from this first plan, are worth noting, as well as such places as Broad Hinton and Dauntsey, the presence of which will perhaps surprise many readers. The spelling of other places is somewhat disguised, but they will be easily recognised. Further let it be noted that in about three years some forty-three local preachers and exhorters have been raised up, and the usual features of a Circuit's life established. As shown above, these preaching places at this time included "CHAPELS" up to 1828, only four chapels. The others were in cottages, rented rooms, SORTS. barns, lofts, village greens, cart sheds, and work-shops. Here the fire and energy of Primitive Methodism was kept burning, men

and women were continually added unto the Lord, and the children instructed, until in March 1828, "this new Circuit employed four travelling preachers" regularly, with extra workers added as thought desirable, and contained five hundred members, beside those in the Stroud branch. This had all been accomplished without the charge of a single penny being placed upon the Shrewsbury Circuit, and in fact the large sale of hymn-books, etc., had actually bestowed considerable financial benefit upon that Circuit. As will be seen later, this feature has always marked the Brinkworth Circuit. She has always been a giver and never a receiver in that direction, and has found her blessedness therein. Strong in herself and strong for others, she has ever been a Circuit to help, to stimulate, and even to rescue those around who have needed her assistance. By the end of Mr. Heath's superintendency, July '28, the following places had been added to the plan, viz, Kington, Highway, Purton, Coate, Liddington, Yoaksey, Bremhill, Wroughton, Copid Hall, Liddiard Millicent, and Haydon Wick. Mr. Heath was succeeded by Mr. John Ride as superintendent, and the advent of this great missionary spirit into the Circuit, was the beginning of a still greater advance in the near future, which must be recorded in a future chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

“A Circuit of Note.”

JOHN RIDE, who came to Brinkworth Circuit as superintendent in July 1828, was one of the greatest missionaries and Circuit superintendents that the Primitive Methodist Church has produced. For practically the whole period of his ministry he was engaged in extension work, and finally died on the Mission Station at Benalla in Australia. To him, more than to any other single individual, is to be traced the wonderful spread of Primitive Methodism eastward, springing from the Brinkworth Circuit, which only ended when the missions of the Hull and Norwich Districts rendered further advance unnecessary. With him as its human guide, the Brinkworth Circuit began to be what Hugh Bourne described it to be, “A Circuit of Note” in the Connexion, and what Mr. Kendall writing in 1907 has described as “The famous Brinkworth Circuit.” Famous it was

in the days gone by for the light it gave, by the power of God, to scores of benighted villages and towns, and "Of Note" it is as a Mother of Circuits in the past, and as a most loyal and vigorous Circuit of to-day. Full proof of this we hope will be shown in this chapter. By Faith, by Love, by Liberality and Self-Denial, allied to Laborious care and unstinted Zeal, the Circuit has ever shown true greatness of spirit. All things considered it has made a contribution to Connexional Life which will favorably compare with that of any other Circuit. In 1833 the Brinkworth District was formed, and included the following Circuits, viz., Brinkworth, Blaenavon, Witney, Frome, Pillowell, Haverfordwest, HEAD Motcombe, Redruth, St. Austell, Bath, OF A Stroud, Salisbury, Shefford, Moreton, and DISTRICT. St. Ives. The District remained undivided until the formation of the Bristol District in 1848, and the London District in 1853. Before these divisions, in addition to the Circuits named above, the Brinkworth District included Worcester Branch, Reading, Aylesbury, Buckingham, Luton, Weymouth, Poole, Southampton, Maidenhead, Swansea. Pembroke, Hereford, and a number of intervening stations. The Salisbury and Southampton District was mainly formed out of it in 1893, and the name, for the sake of easier localisation, was in 1896 changed to the Brinkworth and Swindon District. In the early days of our church several villages gave their names to Districts, but only for a

short time, and the village of Brinkworth alone is found to-day as the name of a District. It is not likely to lose its proud distinction now, and so a permanent memorial of the village victories of our church in the past will be retained.

On the Circuit Plan, Jan.-Apr., 1829, appears the following special Notice: "A Missionary Meeting will be held at Wootton Bassett on Good Friday, to commence at two o'clock; likewise a General Fast will be kept throughout the Circuit on Good Friday."

That Meeting was held, and presumably BERKSHIRE the Fast was observed, and remarkable MISSION. results followed. Long and earnest were the prayers offered that the proposed Mission into Berkshire might be crowned with success, and Mr. Ind was heard to declare his conviction that for every penny contributed a soul would be won. As everybody knows, that was but a faint adumbration of the glorious results to be achieved. With a balance in the Circuit Funds of £7 10s. 8d., and a membership, excluding Stroud Branch, of 527, the superintendent J. Ride, with John Petty, set out on April 27th, to explore and evangelise into Berkshire. The Circuit at that time stretched from near Tetbury to Liddington and Badbury, and from Cricklade and Stratton to near Calne and Chippenham. Beyond these bounds the missionaries now stepped, and leaving for the present the north-east corner of Wilts, they opened their Mission

at Wanborough on April 27th. Thence they visited successively Little Hinton, Church Hinton, Bishopstone, Idstone and Ashbury, carefully feeling their way to see if there was need of their services. At Ashbury they found a clergyman, rare among his class, who afterwards, hearing Mr. Jukes, declared that his curates had come. At Bourton, after singing through the village, they preached the first Primitive Methodist sermon in Berkshire. Day by day the missionaries journeyed on through that week and the next, as told by Mr. Petty himself, and on May 1st preached at Ramsbury and Aldbourne, and then returned to Wootton Bassett, visiting other villages on the way, Mr. Petty, apparently, being called away shortly to other parts of the Connexion.

The Report they gave showed the great need and urgency of the establishment of a Mission to Berkshire and that part of Wiltshire bordering it. As Mr. Heath had found it in North Wilts, so they found it in Berkshire. There were no Wesleyans, and very few Dissenters of any kind, and, save at Ashbury, clergymen with evangelical sympathies were unknown. The opposition and cruelty the missionaries received gives abundant evidence of the lack of religion, and consequently of morals, amongst all ranks of society, as does also the bitter and persistent persecution levelled against their early converts. The response made to the appeal of God thus made known by those who had been "to spy out

the land" was immediate and continued. The Circuit and the missionaries alike vowed to win this district for Christ, and the heroism of the latter, both men and women, was used of God to accomplish this.

On May 10th, Mr. R. Jukes was definitely set aside as the missionary. He took the same route largely as his predecessors, preaching also with varied success at Ogbourne, Baydon and Highworth, and to Shrivenham he payed repeated visits during the next month. Here he absolutely failed to

R. JUKES effect any apparent good, being only
AND greeted with ridicule, molestation, and
T. RUSSELL. opposition, and he had to leave the
place at last without establishing any
society. The June Quarterly Meeting sent out Mr.
Moore to assist him, and together they labored hard,
endured much persecution, but were "cheered with
signs of good, and the prospect of ultimate success."
In September, Mr. Moore was succeeded by Mr. T.
Russell, a man of great physical endurance, who
became pre-eminently the Apostle of Berkshire. At
Upper Lambourn the first Society of seven members
was formed at the end of September, 1829, and with
other small societies a membership of forty-eight was
reported to the December Quarterly Meeting, with a
contribution therefrom to the Circuit Funds of five
guineas. Mr. Ride was now sent to superintend the
mission, with Mr. Russell as his colleague. On the

PRIMITIVE METHODIST PREACHERS SUNDAY PLAN Of Brinkworth Circuit.

Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee. 1st Tim. 4. 16.

1827.	JULY		AUGUST				SEPT.				OCT.		
	22	29	5	12	19	26	2	9	16	23	30	7	14
PLACES AND TIME.													
Brinkworth $\frac{1}{2}$ past 9 and 6 ...	15 2	12 4	9 3	7 8	17 2	1 C	20 3	6	10 2 S	21 1	14 3	11	22 2
Seagry 10 and 6 ...	7 4	36 3	34 32	10 2 T	24 1	3 C	■	24 2 S	11	9 3	6	2	12 1
Langley 2 ...	4	3	32	2 T	1	23	36	2 C	34	3	10	7	1
Cricklade $\frac{1}{2}$ past 1 & 6	6 19	2 31	4 16	35 18	11	■	1 C	3 40	15 13	2 16	1 19	3 18	32 31
Blunsdon 6 ...	6	2	48	3	11	2	1 C	3	15	2	1	3	32
Eascott 2 ...	16	19	13	26	48	18	31	28	18	18	29	6	47
Broad Town 10 & 6 ...	9 3	8 6	15 2 L	14 1	20 35	11 8	29 2	26 1 C	9 28	7 6	12 2	1	21
Wotton Basset $\frac{1}{2}$ past 1 and 6 ...	21	15	2 28	11 14	3	6	2 S 32	8 26	3 C	28	2	20	27
Tottenham 2, Grettenham 6 ...	20	28	42	33	43	17	21 C	11 L	7	25	29	12	45
Guadirc 2, Clack 6	28	27	26	36	46	10	12	21	1 C	17	42	24	46
Christian-Malford 2, Dauntsey 6 ...	14	45	29	30	44	43	24	36	21 C	15	20	34	41
Malmesbury 2 and 6	2 7	4 23	3 24	6	2 42	9	11	15	2 C 8	1	3 10	12	2 30
Hullavington 2, Stanton 6 ...	30	24	23	41	32	12	10	7	42	36	30	8	9
Garsdon 2, Stonehill 5	29	21	43	42	22	15	14	11	6 C	41	37	9	44
Hook 5 ...	9	8	17	11	20	6 C	27	8	47	7	39	1	48
Broad-Hinton 2 ...	3	6	15	1	9	8	17	1 C	26	6	32	42	11
Stratton 6 ...	16	19	13	38	40	18	39	16	19	18	38	6	38

NOTE. — S. Sacrament; L. Lovefeast; T. Tickets; C. Collection.

Quarter Day will be held at Brinkworth, Sept. 17th, Preachers will meet at 9 o'clock, Leaders and Stewards at 2.

That no Person be permitted to preach among us, whose name is not on the Printed Plan, or approved of by the Circuit Committee. Every Preacher must strictly attend to his own appointment, unless prevented by Sickness or some other lawful cause.

PREACHERS.

1. S. Heath
2. G. Holloway
3. E. Foizey
4. J. Kellet
5. M. Cutler
6. J. Dixon
7. C. Carey
8. J. Hathrill
9. P. Ford
10. T. Wall
11. C. Matthews
12. W. Collett
13. B. Wheeler
14. J. Matthews
15. J. Sly
16. J. Skinner
17. J. Dash
18. J. Eggleton
19. B. Godwin
20. T. Dash
21. J. Matthews
22. A. Woodward
23. T. Knapp
24. J. Smith

ON TRIAL.

25. W. Webb
26. A. Trotman
27. P. Woodward
28. W. Miles
29. J. Brooks
30. I. Teagle
31. I. Brush
32. W. Horsell
33. M. Sherrer
34. J. Simkins
35. I. Gee
36. M. Sealey
37. T. Spencer
38. J. Matthews
39. J. Page
40. R. Sharps
41. J. Smith

EXHORTERS.

42. J. Dixon
43. R. Matthews
44. A. Sly
45. A. Matthews
46. C. Smith
47. J. Habgood
48. A. Reynolds

PRIMITIVE METHODIST PREACHERS' SUNDAY PLAN
OF THE

**BERKSHIRE MISSION OF THE BRINKWORTH
CIRCUIT, 1827 and 1830.**

"The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few."—Luke x. 2.

MONTHS	TIME.	OCT.	NOVEMBER.					DECEMBER,				JAN.			
			18	25	1	8	15	22	29	6	13	20	27	1	8
Bishopstone ...	5		1	4	3	*	1C	5	4	2	3	4	1	*	2
Ashbury ...	12		1	4	3	*	1C	5	4	2	3	4	1	*	2
Hinton ...	10	1	5	2	4	1	5	4	2C	1	4	1	1		
Wanborough ...	2	3	5	2	4	*	3C	3	*	1	5	4	1		
Baydon	10	3		4			2C		3		2		5		4
Aldbourne ...	4	3		4			2C		3		2		5		4
Bourton ...	10		3		1C		2			4		3		2	
Marston ...	3		3		1		2C		4		3		2		
Ogbourne St. George	10														
Ogbourne St. Andrew	2		4		5		3		2C		4		3		5
East Garston ...	10														
Eastbury ...	2			2		3		1		1C		2		1	
Lambourn ...	2														
Up-Lambourn ...	5			1C		2		4		3		1		5	
Uffington ...	12			2		1		4		1C		5		2	
Woolson ...	5													3	

"Take heed how ye hear."

PREACHERS.

- 1. R. Jukes, T.P.
- 2. T. Russell, T.P.
- 3. J. Habgood.
- 4. G. Morse.
- 5. J. Baker.

C. For Collection.

T. For Tickets.

N.B.—The preachers on this Plan are subject to the same Rules which are on the Circuit Plan.



January plan of 1830, "The Berkshire Mission" appears with the following places:—Ashbury, Bishopstone, Hinton, Wanborough, Aldbourne, Ogbourne St. George, Ogbourne St. Andrew, Eastbury, East Garsdon, Lambourn, Upper Lambourn, Bourton, Marston. By the end of the year the Mission reported 303 members, and the Mission has become the Shefford Mission, with J. Ride, T. Russell, (Miss) E. Smith, M. Harding and T. Adams as the missionaries; and it has a separate plan of its own with twenty-seven preaching places. In January 1831, the Mission became the Shefford Branch, and Jan. 1832, saw the Branch formed into a Circuit with 596 members, seven travelling preachers, about forty local preachers and exhorters, and forty-eight preaching places. It had certainly grown large enough and strong enough to become a Circuit, but as this is the story of Brinkworth Circuit and not of the Shefford Circuit, afterwards called Newbury, the wonderful work the daughter Circuit accomplished, with its soul-stirring account of the heroic labors of Ride, Russell, Bishop, (Miss) E. Smith and others, must be left to be told elsewhere. Here we will only pause to give some account of Missionary work in those days. A Plan of the Berkshire Mission, which will illustrate somewhat the methods of labor referred to by Mr. Ride below, is here given.

The P.M. Magazine of 1834 contains the following account of a—

MISSIONARY SYSTEM

sent by "John Ride," as operating in the Shefford Circuit, and may be taken as "a plain unvarnished tale" of what was done in the operations sketched above, and further on in the chapter.

1. Every preacher sent out to mission is to preach eight sermons a week, three on the Sabbath and five on the week days; and as many more as he chooses.

2. Sometimes two preachers are sent out together; and sometimes one preacher is sent out by himself. If there be but one preacher, he takes up eight places, towns, villages, or neighborhoods. He takes them before him without omitting any; so that his missionary range covers a certain part of the country; and he does not omit any particular place on account of its appearing to be unlikely, but sweeps the country as far as he goes.

3. His duty is to preach one sermon a week at each place, in regular order. His Sunday preaching is usually given to the towns if there be any on his mission. And his preaching is almost uniformly in the open air, winter or summer. After preaching he endeavors to obtain a house to hold a prayer meeting. And if he have no one to assist he sings and prays; and then sings, prays, and concludes. Of course, he speaks a little if he chooses.

4. In addition to these labors, he diligently visits from house to house, and uses all other prudent means to bring forward the work of God. They sometimes lend tracts.

5. He is expected to live on his mission. The diligent family visiting is one peculiar means of opening his way; and if he conducts himself properly, it is found that almost uniformly the Lord opens his way both for food and lodging. But still he must expect privations.

6. So soon as the work breaks out, he forms societies, and uses every means to cultivate the minds of the people, and improve their talents. He meets the classes after preaching, and brings forward all he can to pray in the class meetings.

7. As soon as any appear to have talents for further usefulness they are formed in praying companies, and planned to hold meetings at different places on the Sundays, -- and this is also a nursery for local preachers.

8. So soon as any of the week-night places can, by this means, have Sunday services, the week-night preaching is immediately taken off to once a fortnight, and this opens the missionary's way to take in new places. And so he proceeds until his mission is made into a branch.

9. If a place be long before a society be raised, they do not hastily give it up, but try every possible means to bring it forward.

10. When the missionary has preached a quarter at his eight places, he makes a general collection at every place for the support of the mission; and this seldom fails paying his salary, and sometimes it does more. And in like manner he makes a collection at the end of each quarter.

11. When two preachers are sent out together, they take up sixteen places, and follow each other in rotation, on a regular plan, preaching once a week at each place. And in all other respects proceed on the system already laid down.

12. If grievous persecution breaks out at any place, it is made known as soon as possible throughout the Circuit, and every society is engaged to pray for that particular place. And this has been blessed indeed.

Such is the bare outline of missionarying in "the brave days of old." Read with sympathetic insight, and alongside the facts and figures of the period, there is enough to warm the blood of the coldest, and enough to inspire the bravest and most self-sacrificing. At first, no doubt, the missionarying was less systematic than this, but it was all on the same lines,

and the details of the picture may be a little filled in by the aid of the following incidents:

On their first journey, Messrs. Ride and Petty entered Aldbourne amid great excitement, caused by the news of their arrival. Their earnest prayers at the cross were attended by the loud mocking laughter of children, adults only looking on from **MISSIONING INCIDENTS.** a distance, but at the close they found themselves surrounded by hundreds of people, who had come in to see them from all the neighborhood. The preaching was done to the accompaniment of the music of "merry-andrews," close behind the preacher. A horseman attempted to ride through the listening crowd; the clerk of the church walked round the congregation ringing a large bell, and getting the children to shout and scream. The missionaries, however, won the battle, and concluded the service in an orderly manner amidst quietness. Let it be noted that while this was going on at Aldbourne, many of the friends were assembled for prayer near Wootton Bassett, and in most earnest supplication on behalf of the missionaries they continued for many hours. Thus prayer and courageous zeal went together.

Preaching under the starlight at Church Lambourn, the exertion necessary to make himself heard caused Mr. Russell to vomit a quantity of blood, this sign of suffering opening for him the first

home there. This house became the preaching house, and to at once protect the dwelling and the tenant from probable damage, Mr. Russell walked to Salisbury and back, thirty miles, through the snow to secure a license. The preaching, as Mr. Ride says, was "generally in the open air," for sympathisers dare not open their houses either for the preachers or for services for fear of persecution or dismissal from their employment, and some of the preachers "had to wander on the Downs all night, after preaching, having nowhere to sleep." Only after a long round of agonising prayer in the corner of a wood at Ashdown, in February 1830, in the snow, did Mr. Ride and Mr. Russell obtain sufficient power and assurance to continue the mission against the widespread and

powerful opposition manifested. The cry
ASHDOWN of "God give us Berkshire" from the
Wood. souls of men prepared to die if necessary
for Berkshire, gave them the county for
Primitive Methodism; the shout of faiths' victory
was heard, "Yonder country's ours; yonder country's
ours."

In the Circuit Account book for June 1830, appears the following item: "Paid to Mr. J. Habgood for going to Abingdon, 13/-." There he had been sent to visit Mr. Russell in gaol, to which he had been sentenced for three months, ostensibly for selling the ten pennyworth of hymn books without a license, though the magistrates repeatedly offered to set him

at liberty if he would promise not to preach. Again we find the following items in the early years : "For licenses £1; 10/-; etc ;" "Expenses for attempting to take J. H. before the magistrates, £1 10s. 9d.;" "Law expenses at Ashton Keynes, Hook, Blunsdon" were incurred to preserve property acquired ; "Collections to meet expenses of trials of persecutors at Cirencester," and the Minutes' Books often refer to persecutions at Cricklade and elsewhere, and "that the travelling preachers all live together" indicates the pressure of circumstances, financial and otherwise. The following incident in the life of George Wallis, a native of Wootton Bassett, who became one of the early and well known ministers of the District, is given by Mr. Kendall, and illuminates the "Missionary System" given above: "One evening, Mr. G. Wallis, who had been preaching at a distant A STRAW village, made for the hospitable home of BED. Mr. S. Goddard, near Newbury, but found that all had retired to rest. Not caring to disturb them, he crept into a heap of straw to sleep. Later on came Mr. Thomas Russell, who had been unable to find shelter elsewhere. The family were soon roused by the new comer, and the youthful missionary, like John following the bolder Peter, left the straw for more comfortable quarters."

However, as we have heard it said, "Difficulties were made to conquer," and "The devil was made to

try, not to triumph over, the souls of men." Enemies were numerous, but friends were found **FRIENDS** also. Bigotry was almost universally prevalent amongst the adherents, and especially the clergymen of the State Church, **IN NEED.** but again and again the ministers and members of the Free Churches of those times succoured our missionaries ; the Baptist minister's wife rushes into the threatening crowd at Aldbourne and brings Thomas Russell to shelter, and Mr. John Wilkes of the London Religious Protection Society, rescues the same missionary from Abingdon gaol at the end of a month's imprisonment. Mr. Russell appears at Brinkworth Missionary Meeting with plastered forehead and a black eye, from the determined persecution of Faringdon, but the warm hearted support of Missions by the Circuit is increased. William Hawkins, a farm laborer, is dismissed for joining the new "Society," but in a few years he is a prosperous farmer, and a friend of "the cause" all around. Thomas Hunt, of Broad Town, is threatened with dismissal if he will not cease to preach, but the church prays about his difficulty ; and the foolish farmer is bluntly told by another farmer, "If you do sack Hunt, then he shall thatch my ricks, his wife shall darn the stockings, his boy shall make bee huckles. I'll set them on at once, and I'll open my barn for the services." Everywhere it may happen that great opposition is met with from "the lawyer, the constable, the clergyman, and the devil," but at

the end of ten years there are hundreds of Primitive Methodist preaching places of all kinds, thousands of church members, and hundreds of local preachers and other workers, in Wiltshire, Berkshire, and Hampshire, who are steadfastly bent on winning men for Christ, on saving men from sin and hell, and into heaven at last by the preaching of the Gospel of the Cross of Christ.

Great days were those for the Brinkworth Circuit. The constant coming and going of the missionaries, coupled with the constant life of the Circuit work, which was still growing; the efforts to secure permanent foot-hold by securing sites of land, and then by the erection of Connexional buildings, and again the calling out and sending forth of fresh missionaries into new fields of labor, kept the fire burning in new-born souls, and the meetings full of inspiration and power that gave the assurance of a life of vigor in the years to come. The story of the further Missionary work of the Circuit may now be briefly told.

When Shefford Branch was made a Circuit in January 1832, Brinkworth retained the following list of "Places," viz., Brinkworth, Seagry, Langly, Kington, Cricklade, Blunsdon, Eastcott, Broad Town, Wootton Bassett, Tottenham, Grittenham, Goatacre, Clack, Christian Malford, Dancey, Greenhill, Purton, Stone Hill, Stratton, Tytherton,

Avon, Badbury, Chiseldon, Wroughton, Cleverton, Malmesbury, Purton Stoke, Preston, Hampton, Hannington, Hilmarton, Bushton, Little Summerford, Moreden, Sutton, while Foxham and Coat also appear in the Account Book List, a total of 37 places. No

membership record however is to be found until September 1833, when it is given as 530. At Wootton Bassett a cottage was turned into a chapel in 1831, and at Purton Stoke in 1832, and at the June Quarterly Meeting of 1832 the Circuit resumed its missionary operations. The way eastward and southward being blocked by other Circuits, attention was perforce directed to the west of Wiltshire. In Chippenham no society had been formed since the attempts of the earliest days. It was now decided to "re-open" Chippenham, and Mr. Samuel Turner and Jas. Baker (born and converted at Hodson near Chiseldon) were sent as the missionaries of this new undertaking. For one quarter this appears on the "Plan" as the Castlecoombe Mission, and that marks the beginning of the new extension. Thence they passed to Chippenham. Considerable opposition was met with, but the firmness of Mr. Turner overcame magisterial and other resistance, a foothold was gained, the Friends' Meeting House was ultimately purchased, Calne and other places were entered and services planned thereat, and at the end of six months the Chippenham Mission Plan contained eighteen places, including three market towns. Societies had been

formed at Stockley, Calne, Headington, Binacre, Laycock, Derry Hill, Studley, Thickwood, Biddleston, Coate, Rowde, and Cherhill, besides Chippenham itself, and the membership was over a hundred. This had been accomplished only by the great zeal and sturdiness of these pioneers, stayed and supported by the loyalty of the converts. Dowsed with water, and threatened with fire, and enduring privations, the missionaries triumphed, for the churches of the Circuit and the Mission prayed without ceasing for their victory, and God gave them power. In 1835 the Mission became a Circuit, with 350 members, and forty-one preaching places.

The joy of success filled the Circuit, and the work at home was vigorously prosecuted, with signs following. A Revival broke out at Hook at which twenty people professed conversion; other societies were enlarged, and the aggressive spirit grew. A conviction that Brinkworth should mission **BRISTOL**. Bristol had been in the mind of the Circuit for a considerable time, but it was a great thing to attempt. Bristol was a city of fame, a centre of influence in all the west country. To mission Bristol as Primitive Methodists would be a great undertaking, but a wise one. Could it be done? The Western Mission of 1823 had failed at Bristol, but the Brinkworth Circuit, though a village Circuit, possessed this advantage: it was near enough to keep in constant touch with its missionaries if they were

sent, and strong enough to help and re-inforce if necessary. At the end of nearly a year of anxious thought and prayer it was decided to make the advance. It was the will of God that Brinkworth should mission Bristol, and Samuel West and Samuel Turner were chosen for the work. The Bristol Mission was on the "Plan" for April to June, 1833, with these brethren planned, but only probably that the matter might be plainly brought before the whole Circuit, as a plea for further prayer, and the arrival at Bristol occurred on July 13th of that year. Their departure was preceded by the usual Missionary Meeting in the evening of the Quarter Day at Stratton, and by the stimulus of the "Union Camp Meeting" on Bishopstone Down as the Plan has it, in which the Brinkworth and Shefford Circuits united, on June 16th. This Camp Meeting was a great success, the projected mission was laid afresh on many hearts, and the selected missionaries were strengthened. After resting a night at Mr. Jas. Franklin's at Clack, doubtless full of prayer and thought these two zealous and laborious brethren, "well provisioned," set off on the march for Bristol. A preliminary survey of the condition of things at once convinced them of the abundant necessity of the preaching of the Gospel of the Grace of God. Great degradation was manifest, and again and again they were filled with unutterable anguish as they attempted "to save some" of those who so plainly needed salvation. On Sunday, July 14th, they commenced

their work by singing through the streets, and holding a service at Poyntzpool, where Mr. West preached a powerful and impressive sermon. This was followed by a service in the afternoon at Queen's square, and at night Mr. West preached at the Drawbridge. Something was done to reach the people's hearts day by day, and at the above places, on the Plain, and at Broad Street, the services were continued. The next Sunday saw them again preaching; at the Drawbridge a large congregation listened to the discourses, and a great influence rested upon them. Sinners were convicted, sought advice and counsel, and found pardon for sin. Dolman's chapel, a small building, was opened for worship on August 2nd, in the midst of a poor and dense population who had been blessed by the labors of the missionaries. The following extracts from Mr. West's journal will show us the missionaries at work: "Friday, July 19th.—I preached at Broad St., and held a prayer meeting. A powerful meeting. The people, during the week, had listened with great attention to the gospel of God: many hearts have been melted, and MR. WEST'S JOURNAL. there is every appearance of a good work at Bristol. O Lord, send us a mighty shower. Amen. Wednesday, 24th.—Brother Turner preached on the Plain in the full glory. The word went home, and there is an evident breaking out of the work of God. The harvest appears quite ripe.—Lord, raise up laborers." And so on the journal runs. Let the reader pause to

contemplate such work as this by the two Brinkworth missionaries to Bristol. A work not unique, thank God, in the annals of our church, but a work at one with those other efforts which successfully planted Primitive Methodism in London and the great provincial cities of our land. For it is a fact that this mission had established Primitive Methodism in Bristol; the villagers had seized a secure foothold in the city, Brinkworth had taken hold of Bristol, and for nearly four years carefully nourished the Connexional life thus planted. More than once in those early days, the cupboard of the missionaries was replenished direct from the village Circuit. "Let us go and see how Brother West and Brother Turner are getting on at Bristol," cries good old Stephen Matthews of Brinkworth to Baker Matthews, and at once preparation is made. First, the

STORES donkey is brought out, then the cart ;
REPLENISHED. a bag of potatoes is placed therein with other smaller provisions ; all is crowned with a good gammon of bacon, and off amid the good wishes of the folk for the thirty mile journey to Bristol. There the donkey is put up, and on the broad shoulders of the visitors, potatoes and bacon are carried through the streets of Bristol to the preachers lodgings. The scene that took place between the four may well be imagined, and we may be sure that they would not part till they had made a tour of the preaching places, and had a "round" of praise and prayer for both Brinkworth and Bristol,

Such an act was a regular feature of the provisioning of the preachers both in the Berkshire and the Bristol Missions at first, and what is recorded above of the former is proof of the necessity of such practical sympathy. As the day, so the deed, and for the people and the times, that was a good way to work, and thereby and by similar conduct the souls of men were knit together, and the cords could not be broken. The preachers were beloved of the people, and "The Old Brinkworth Circuit" had a warm place in the hearts of the preachers. By October, 1833, the Bristol Mission Plan shows the following places regularly supplied by the two missionaries, aided by three groups of Prayer Leaders:—Dolman's Chapel, Bedminster, St. Phillips' Plain, Fishponds, Great Gardens, Little Ann's St., and Kingswood; Made-forever was added later. By slow degrees, and at a cost, the mission was developed, and at March Quarterly Meeting, 1837, the Bristol Circuit was formed with 190 members, twenty preaching places, and twenty local preachers. To-day there are in Bristol six Circuits, which of late years particularly are showing considerable enterprise, promising a bright future.

The next mission that appears on the plan is that of Tetbury, just over the border of Gloucestershire. It had been decided "That Bros. Preston and Excell go out on a Mission to Tetbury and the country

round, to commence April 8th (1838)." As a result the Plan of the Tetbury Mission appears **TETBURY.** next quarter with Tetbury, Culkerton, Crudwell, Sherston, Luckington, Diddington, Horton, Hawkesbury Upton, Nailsworth, Minchinhampton, Avening, Eastcot and Oaksey, supplied by T. Cummin and J. Excell, T.P's, three local preachers and auxiliaries from Brinkworth, Seagry, etc. Hard was the soil here, and slow the progress, for hyper-Calvinism was deeply rooted. No longer the brilliant victories of Berkshire, Chippenham, or Bristol, but long continued and arduous effort. But the fire of the old times burned steadily on for a score of years, until at last a Circuit was formed. Meanwhile, twelve months after this mission was opened, it was decided to "open a new mission at Cirencester in April," and the July

Plan of 1839 shows Cirencester **CIRENCESTER.** Mission with Sabbath appointments at Cirencester, Watermore, Easington, Randcome, North Cerney, and Bainton, and week-night appointments at Down Ampney, Latton, Poulton, Ashbrook, Somerford Keynes, Siddington, Preston, Daglingworth, and Upper Duntsborne; J. Godwin and J. Best were the missionaries. At the beginning of 1840 these two missions were united and became the Tetbury and Cirencester Branch, with 100 members, and 19 preaching places, with Mr. D. Kent as superintendent.



REV. J. S. STILL



REV. R. DAVIES



REV. G. WARDLE



REV. THOMAS CUMMINS



REV. DANIEL HARDING



REV. SAMUEL TURNER



REV. L. HEDGES



REV. R. JONES



REV. S. WEST

Leaving this for a time we next note that "Cheltenham Branch" is added to the Circuit at the same period that Cirencester Mission was opened. This branch included Cheltenham, Gloucester, Houlstone and Chorlton, with fifty-two **CHELTENHAM.** members. Up to this time Cheltenham had been a Mission of the Moreton-in-the-Marsh Circuit in Gloucestershire, evidently became detached therefrom, and, unable to stand alone was probably offered to, or offered itself to, the powerful Brinkworth Circuit, whose fame was known in all the Connexion. Under this fostering care, the branch continued until 1845, losing Gloucester early, but missioning Tewkesbury and other places. It is now under the care of the General Missionary Committee.

Yet again the Circuit's Missionary zeal leads it to undertake another mission. Primitive Methodism was introduced into Worcester at the **WORCESTER.** time of the imprisonment of Mr. Brownsword in 1820, became a branch of the Birmingham Circuit and was afterwards attached, perhaps somewhat loosely, to Kidderminster Circuit. News comes to Brinkworth that Worcester needs missioning, and so a letter is written to ask Kidderminster Circuit if they wish to give up Worcester and its dependencies, and if so, to send a proper statement of it. Hugh Bourne, visiting the Circuit writes, "Our Brethren intend to establish a

Mission in Worcestershire," and Mr. Preston follows this with the following : "This Quarter Day (Sep. 21 and Oct. 10, 1840) agreed to take up Worcester (as a mission). We think we can support it. We have prayed much about it, and believe it to be of the Lord. May he help us, open our way, and prosper the undertaking. Amen." Worcester was "taken up," Mr. Best was placed in charge, and Mr. Preston went with him, a matter of a fifty mile journey as the crow flies "to see how things are, and take him lodgings." The journey was done partly by road and partly by rail ; the old tramping days are o'er. It was also decided that Bro. Best take in six villages (evidently on Mr. Ride's Missionary System) besides what they had, and Mr. Preston was deputed to attend the December Mission Quarter Day. Thereat the membership reported was forty-four, with six preaching places. Thence onward to the end of 1849, with one period of decline, the Mission grew, but at that time, the Worcester Branch was offered to the General Missionary Committee, but joined in 1850 to the Ludlow Circuit. When separated from the Brinkworth Circuit, it had a membership of 104, with two ministers, fourteen local preachers, and eleven preaching places.

Once more this wonderful missionary Circuit takes in hand a Mission, the last to be undertaken, at its north-east corner, where Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Berkshire, and Oxfordshire come together. Four

places, viz., Filkins, Eastleach, Little Faringdon and Whelford, had been received from the Witney Circuit, Alscott, Brize Norton, Southerop, FILKINS. Quennington, Hatherop, and Fairford were missioned and the Filkins Mission was constituted. This Mission reached a membership of 128, and then in 1844 made a part of the Cirencester, Cheltenham and Filkins Branch. The next year the Cirencester and Cheltenham parts of this branch, grown large and vigorous, were made a Circuit, and the Filkins Mission became part of the newly formed Highworth Circuit. When this last named Circuit was broken up, the Filkins Mission part of it was attached to the Faringdon Circuit, of which it forms a part at the present time.

Lastly, we must follow the fortunes of the Tetbury Mission. In February, 1840 we find the Tetbury and Cirencester Branch formed from the Missions so named. In two years Tetbury has disappeared and with it the greater part of its dependencies. A few, of the places, however, are found on the Circuit Plan, and perhaps the rest are accounted for by the word Mission, Mission, Mission, Mission, which have regular appointments made on the same Plan. At any rate this seems a very likely explanation for we now see, in April 1843, the appearance of the Tormarton Mission Plan, upon which are gradually put the places formerly found in the Tetbury Mission. Two years later Hawkesbury

Upton heads this Mission and gives its name thereto, and remains thus for thirteen more **MALMESBURY.** years. In 1858, to it are added from the parent Circuit, Malmesbury, Seagry, Christian Malford, Cleverton, Startley, Stanton, Hullavington, Garsdon, Brokenborough and Tetbury, and the eighteen places thus brought together form the Malmesbury Branch. The Malmesbury Circuit began its career in January 1859, with 191 members and sixteen preaching places. Thus, a year before the celebration of the Jubilee of the Connexion, the crowning point of the last missionary effort of the Circuit was reached, the culminating point of a wonderful, an amazing display of missioning and extension zeal that operated without cessation for a period of thirty-five years. From the time of Mr. Heath's opening sermon on the Green of the spiritually neglected village of Brinkworth, to the date given above, we see a sustained effort, and a plan working out, that fully justifies the eulogiums bestowed by every Connexional historian upon "The famous Brinkworth Circuit."

This section will fittingly be closed by an account of the successful enterprize which ended with the formation of a Circuit from its latest missionary movement.

The Final Assault on Malmesbury: This town is only five miles from Brinkworth. Around it on

every side for thirty-five years the forces of Primitive Methodism had operated, but never more than a temporary lodgment had been effected. The persecution of the first missionaries to Malmesbury has been already referred to, but in spite of it, the town appears on the first Plan of the Circuit, and the difficulty of achieving success is seen from the following facts. The name appears on the Plan till October 1836 (except from Jan., '29 to Apr., '30); from August 1840 to May 1842 it is connected with Tetbury Mission; for three months in the beginning of 1843 it is on the Circuit Plan, and then disappears for eight years, tho' it is probably occasionally visited as a "Mission" appointment.

A Society of three members had been formed there about April 1830, but this never reached more than twelve in number, and from 1836 to March 1853 no membership was reported at all. In the early period again for two or three years, a Chapel was rented at £4 per year, but had to be vacated because of failure to build up a church. But now the hour of triumph approaches. In May '52 services are once more planned, and in the early THE HOUR part of '54 a Society of four members AND is formed. The hour has come, and THE MAN. God sends the man. The western section of the Circuit is placed in the care of George Warner. The March Quarterly

Meeting* "seeks divine help and guidance in the matter" of missioning Malmesbury once more; "the power of God came upon the meeting in a marvellous manner: the brethren rose from their knees assured that it was God's will that they should undertake the work;" and they at once appointed Mr. Warner thereto. For the arduous task the man was well fitted. Very powerful in body, of robust health, he was equally courageous and daring; he feared nothing. Rev. S. Turner, one of the best missionaries the District has known, his first super at Banbury, and an enthusiastic Circuit are at his back, and God's call sounds in his ears; he cannot fail. He finds Malmesbury "a dark, dead place." He preaches incessantly in the town and in the surrounding villages, and lives in the town. He visits much, labors readily in the temperance work and social work of the town, and gains the ear and sympathy of the inhabitants. The Mission succeeded; sinners were converted; a barn was rented and fitted up, and the cost more than raised. By March 1850 the membership of the Society numbered fifty; on April 17th the stones of a New Chapel were laid; on August 17th and 18th, the Chapel, seated to hold about 350 people, was opened amid great rejoicing; and a mission of the Brinkworth Circuit was once more crowned with success.

* The quotations here are from the Life of G. Warner
by J. Stephenson.

2.—A Summary of Thirty-five Years' Work.

It has become a truism to say "Spiritual results cannot be tabulated," and all agree that "figures are not everything." Nevertheless, in this world of flesh and spirit, "Tables" of figures are among the instruments by which spiritual labors and triumphs are bodied forth. Counting heads or hearts may be carried too far, but two good souls are better far than one, whatever the capacity; and, after all, the journey of human spirits through this life must always have its landmarks. A tabulated statement of the things enumerated above will be handy here, and help to gather into one view the labors just recorded.

List of Missions, with dates.

		Date of Commencement	Date of Independence
Stroud Branch	..	.. 1827	
Berkshire Mission	..	April 27th, 1829	1831
Chippenham Mission	..	July 7th, 1832	1835
Bristol Mission	..	July 14th, 1833	.. 1837
Tetbury Mission	..	April, 1838}	
Cheltenham Branch	..	April, 1838}	.. 1845
Cirencester Mission	..	April, 1839)	
Filkins Mission	..	..	1845
Worcester Mission	..	Oct. 14th, 1840,	Transferred 1850
Tormarton, Hawkesbury } Upton, and Malmesbury }		1850-55	.. 1859

List of Circuits resulting therefrom.

Present Circuits.	Circuits formed directly therefrom, with dates.
Brinkworth ..	{ Shefford, 1831 Chippenham, 1835 Bristol, 1837 Cirencester, 1845 Highworth from Filkins Mission, 1845 Malmesbury, 1859 Swindon, 1877

Present Circuits.	Circuits formed directly therefrom, with dates.
Shefford, afterwards named Newbury	Mitcheldever, 1835 Andover, 1837 Farringdon, 1837 Wallingford, 1837 Reading, 1837 Petersfield Hungerford Winchester Romsey Chinnor, Oxford 1845 High Wycombe, 1848 ; Windsor 1848 ; Aylesbury, 1839 ; St. Alban's, Hertford, Henley, Brentford, etc.
Mitcheldever ..	
Andover ..	
Wallingford ..	
Reading ..	
Witney ..	Banbury, 1840 ; Chipping Norton
Aylesbury ..	Luton I., II. ; Stewkley
Swindon ..	Swindon I. 1877 ; Swindon II. 1890

View Points. 1. Periodical (Statistics & chief changes).

Dates	Membership	No. of Chapels	Income	Societies
1829 (March).	527	4	£44	22
	Brinkworth, Seagry and W. Bassett are the strongest places. No Society yet formed at Purton, though preaching is conducted.			
1840 (March).	744	10	£70	33
	Berkshire, Chippenham, and Bristol Missions successfully carried out, and four others now in full operation. Chiseldon and Highworth Societies have become strong. Seagry sunk to 12 members. Four vigorous Missions simultaneously being carried on.			
1850 (March).	801	15	£57	34
	Broad Town, Wootton Bassett, and Ashton Keynes have become strong Societies. Other Missions completed, Hawkesbury Upton alone remains.			
1860 (March).	852	15	£105	26
	Malmesbury Circuit formed ; Swindon and Purton greatly developed.			
1870 (March).	848	20	£90	30
	Stratton Society has become very strong.			
1877 (March).	927	25	£100	29
	New Swindon has reached a membership of 125. At this date Swindon Circuit was formed, taking 433 members, and leaving Brinkworth with 494 members and nineteen Societies.			

2. Interperiodical.

In writing of the Missions of the Circuit, our thought glance has been chiefly directed outwards from the Circuit. It is necessary now that we should carefully note the movements of aggression within the Circuit; ere we pass to consider the inner Circuit life almost exclusively. Notice therefore that continuously the boundaries of the Circuit were being pressed outwards, and at the same time there was an intensive culture of the Lord's garden whose

boundaries had been set up. At "HOME PART" the time when the Berkshire AGGRESSION. Mission was being worked separately, there were no less than forty-eight preaching places on the Plan of the "Home Part," and the Missions themselves, except Bristol and Worcester, were really the result of Circuit extension followed by the strategic move upon a promising centre of population lying just over the border. To those who know the topography of North Wilts, this will appear plain from the following. Before the assault on Chippenham, Sutton Benger, Christian Malford, Bremhill, Tyther-ton and Foxham had been enclosed; North Marston, Kempsford, Castle Eaton, etc., preceded the Fairford Mission and Cricklade Branch of 1833-5, and laid the groundwork of the revival of this in the successful Filkins Mission of 1841. The Tetbury Mission was somewhat of an advance into "The Beyond," altho' Somerford, Stonehill and Oaksey foreshadowed the

gradual movement which pushed rapidly on Tetbury in 1838; and finally in 1839, the march on Cirencester, with its bitter persecutions, was supported by the Circuit at North and South Cerney, Ampney and Latton, while Ashton Keynes and Cricklade were well within reach and co-operated. On the south-east side of the Circuit it will be interesting to note that at some time or other the following places had a place on the Plan, viz., Haydon Wick, Barwick, Monkton, Gospel Oak, Coped Hall, Dauntsey, Highway, Clevancy, Thornhill, Barken, Thornend, Lydiard Plain, Greenhill, Liddington, Uffcott, Woodshaw, East and West Kennett, and Avebury. To-day these are served in some other way.

Taking the Plan of July to September 1844, the Circuit is seen at the height of its operations. On this Plan we have: 1. The Home Part with forty-four places; 2. Cirencester Branch with twenty-six places; 3. Cheltenham Branch with five places; 4. Worcester Branch with thirteen places; 5. Filkins Mission with twelve places; and 6. Tormarton (heir to Tetbury) Mission with fifteen places: 115 preaching places and a total membership of over 1,300.

During the thirty years only one period of decline is noted, viz., that of the years 1834-7. This was caused chiefly by a prolonged period of industrial depression, in which wages were very low and work

hard to get—so it is stated on the Circuit Reports of the period. Here we find that matters were in a trying condition; in the Account Books elaborate care is taken to record the deficiencies of salary due to each preacher; every item of income is raked in, some so small that 'twere better to have left them unrecorded, and special donations were required quarter-day after quarter-day. The contributions of Brinkworth Society once sank as low as £2 11s. 8½d.; of Seagry to 1s. 1d.; of Wootton Bassett to £1 9s. 7½d.; and the whole Circuit income to £32 3s. 6d. However, Brinkworth Circuit was not born to die, nor to languish; the period of depression passed and the missionarying was resumed with renewed vigor.

Methodists eat figures; it is a part of their daily regular food supply, and thereon they grow strong. Enough has been given above to supply for many meals, and it will be advisable to chew the cud lest indigestion follow. This, at least, has thereby been abundantly made plain, that when Hugh Bourne wrote that “Brinkworth has done great things in missionarying,” he only used words of truth and soberness, and the half has not been told.

CHAPTER V.

The Making of the Circuit.

LIKE the building of a living body, the making of a Circuit is a continuous work, and in every generation its life depends upon the rebuilding that is carried on. Perpetually renewing its youth, a Circuit will sometimes need drastic surgical operations, and thorough overhauling. Each age must therefore do its own work, and, to change the figure, architecture must be studied. Again, the life bodied forth will have its periods of growth, but will arrive at maturity. By the performance of much labour this has been done, and Brinkworth Circuit possesses abundant vigor.

The Forms of life manifested have been in Evangelism, Liberality, Education, and of these some account will now be given.

1. EVANGELISM.

The possession of the Evangelistic Spirit and Labor is vital to the Church of Christ everywhere, and its absence from a Primitive Methodist Church is a freak. "Except ye become as a little child, ye cannot enter the kingdom of God ;" and Evangelistic labor is centred upon effecting the new birth. In whatever form Evangelism manifests itself, it has for its constant spur, the word of the Master, "Ye must be born again." The Brinkworth Circuit is and ever has been Evangelistic to the core. The great missionary operations described in the preceding chapter are proof of this in reference to the past, and the maintenance of its numbers and force in spite of declining populations, is witness to the same in reference to the later years. The burden of its preaching has always been, "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish," and its brotherly cry of "Turn to the Lord and seek salvation" has rung out passionately in pleading offer of the Joy of the Lord. The journals of its earlier missionaries were, to a considerable extent, the records of conversions; of the joy felt when these were frequent, and sorrow at their absence. The old battle cry of the Primitives "Hark the gospel news is sounding" has been at once a challenge to the powers of darkness, and an exultant offer to the sinner. Its Camp Meetings were Rallies of the Evangelistic Forces; its Prayer Meetings, held in the open air sometimes, most often in cottages, were times for the Renewal

of the Evangelistic Fires, and in addition, like the Class Meetings and Public Prayer Meetings, applied the match to the fuel of conviction that blazed into penitence and faith, and the joy of acceptance, in thousands of cases.

Thus it has come to pass that Revivals have marked the history of the Circuit from the beginning, and the latest is still in progress. We have heard lately of a man who objected to his son being converted under a fortnight ; he, like the one who is reported to have spoken to Hugh Bourne thus, evidently desired his son to be in "pickle." But every Primitive Methodist knows that the sinner is always in "a pickle," and the sooner he **REVIVALS.** is out of it the better. At Brinkworth at the first, it was said, as conversions were reported, that "it will save his neck if it doesn't save his soul;" drunkards and gamblers and thieves were converted in those days, and the same outstanding witnesses to God's saving power have been seen again and again in the most recent times. Still better, perhaps, large numbers of young men and women, trained in our Sunday Schools, have decided for Christ. The Pen would fain run on for ever in recording these things, but one or two accounts from the past must suffice.

1832 witnessed a general Revival in the Circuit. At Hook Mr. Turner conducted a remarkable Love,

feast. The service lasted until twelve o'clock, and at the close it was found that twenty people Hook, had professed conversion. Many societies ETC. shared in this gracious result, a spirit of liberality was manifested, Miss Ferris and others were converted at Wootton Bassett (of which more hereafter), and at the Bishopstone Down Camp Meeting, fifty conversions took place. This was a preliminary to the Bristol Mission.

On Sunday, August 6th, 1837, Mr. Maylard preached at Elcombe and administered the Sacrament in the morning. In the afternoon there was a Love-feast, when a powerful influence rested on the Meeting; shouts, and cries, tears and smiles, were mingled together. A gay young woman, standing in one corner of the room, imagined that Satan had got hold of her, and she cried loudly for deliverance. After long wrestling she obtained peace. She was so overjoyed that she ran out of the meeting shouting "glory," and across the fields for two miles to her home, to tell what God had done for her soul. A great revival followed in which nearly every family in the neighbourhood was blessed. Estcott, Blunsdon, Highworth, Wootton Bassett, Stratton, Seagry, and Purton Stoke, etc., shared in the blessing of this Revival period. The Tetbury and Cirencester Missions resulted, and apart from these, from March 1838, to March 1839, there was an increase of about 200 members,

1838-9 witnessed a great Revival at Brinkworth. Large congregations on Sunday, but life and zeal not so much as could be desired, and Sunday School teachers lacking. Mr. and Mrs. Preston have much sorrow for souls, and the former was tempted "to give up travelling," from which calamity his wife's faith saved him.

After six weeks of distress, "the cloud burst, three souls got converted at Brinkworth, and now we have such a work as was never before known in that place. We have had thirty-eight increase. Praise God. And the village is all on a move."

A The work spread far and near. Mr. CLOUD-BURST Preston tells us that this glorious work

AT was in answer to prayer, some details
BRINKWORTH. of which shall be recorded. "On

Sunday, Jan. 20th, several of the members agreed to attend all the prayer meetings (five) that week, and to pray for twenty souls to be converted. Three were converted that day, and then Bro. J. Matthews got up and told the people what they had agreed to do, and added 'we have had three converted, and have seventeen more to get, and we mean to have them.' This information spread like fire, and night after night the converting work was witnessed until, finally, some sixty souls had found peace; some were added to the existing classes, and a new class of twenty-four was formed." For eight weeks, every night except Saturday, the meetings



Rev. J. FOWLES



Rev. J. SMITH



Rev. T. JOHNSON



Rev. L. STEVENS



Rev. J. RITTER



Mr. N. W. SURTEES

were continued, and "thank God, we are not weary." This was evidently another fire-centre of the Circuit Revival last referred to.

This account of early Revivals shall be completed by extracts from Mr. Preston's "Account of the work of God at a village called Broad Town, in the Brinkworth Circuit." He had received an impression that he should "stop again (as superintendent) and get . . . members, and you will have a thousand." This was May 1840. Spoken of to friends, "they began to pray for God to pour out his spirit," including the friends at Broad Town, where Mrs. Miles "engaged to raise up a new class and to get

twenty of the number. Nothing particular
BROAD occurred till Sept. 11th. Then, Mr. Hugh
TOWN. Bourne (a frequent visitor to the Circuit at
this period), Mr. Hill, Mr. and Mrs. Miles,
and myself entered into a covenant to pray to God
to turn the River of Life upon Broad Town." Mr.
Bourne preached, many of the officials were much
enlightened thereby and one backslider was reclaimed.
Protracted Meetings began on November 1st with
Processioning, a walking prayer meeting, good
services and a week of meetings. In February 1841,
seven were converted, and this is the final report.
"A great work has taken place, and it has been
chiefly effected by the local preachers and the pious-
praying laborers. Two new classes were raised up.
Forty members were added to the Society. A Class

Leader reports, "We have got the greatest drunkards and Sabbath breakers brought in, and all the persecutors but one." Before Mr. Preston left, the thousand members were obtained. "We will ruin Satan's kingdom," they sang, and in many hearts they did so, never to be set up again.

Revivals as great as these have followed since. Sept. 1861 to Sept. 1865 saw an increase of 168; the two years ending Dec. 1882 record an increase of 170; and from March 1904 to March 1907 there has been an increase of 160. The Evangelistic section of Centenary Celebrations ought to result in taking the total membership up to one thousand. We have the opportunity; it seems that we have the call.

Whatever critics there may be of Revivals, and Revivalism, it seems plain that this is the way in which God works, and that settles everything. "A Revival answers all things"; peace is obtained in place of strife; faith which overcometh the world is raised thereby; courage and every Christian virtue, even that of liberality is stimulated; and those are added daily to the church who shall be saved. With these invariable results, there is nothing left worth criticising, and every Primitive Methodist should be a revivalist.

2. CHAPEL BUILDING.

A Church must have a Home, a place of Meeting which is beyond interference. Scores of

villages in the Brinkworth and Swindon District are to-day without a Primitive Methodist Church, where once one existed, and almost the sole reason is, that a chapel was not erected. In most cases, the blame for this is to be laid to the charge of bigotry on the part of landowners. Hundreds of times have our village churches endeavoured to obtain a site, but all in vain. The high church Parson has poisoned the mind of the Squire, or it has been already poisoned, and a stern refusal has been met with again and again. The land is theirs, and if they hold the land, they hold the people too—such is their sinful notion. Fools are they. The Land is God's gift to all and those who have added "field to field until there is no room," He will bring to account. For the present, however, they triumph. As a matter of fact if they but knew it, they have to thank the very people they persecuted for staving off what threatened to be a bloody revolution in the hard times of the thirties and the "Hungry Forties."

LOCKED-UP LAND. Still, what Church bells loudly rung could not do, what abuse, assault, dismissal, imprisonment could not do, their hitherto impregnable position as holders of the land has enabled them to do—with results just indicated. Thank God the time of the People is coming, the Power of the Peers must pass away.

In these matters the Brinkworth Circuit has had no easier task than other Circuits, tho' its work is not

quite done. It is approaching completion however, and by the end of the Centenary celebrations it is probable that at every place within the Circuit bounds, where it is desired, a chapel will have been erected, or a site of land secured. From the beginning to now, there has been one long sustained struggle to obtain the necessary foothold. Because this has been impossible, places have been abandoned for a generation, and other churches have been driven from pillar to post, until the inevitable weakness has resulted in the vacating of the village. The difficulties which have had to be overcome may be gathered from what follows.

Name of Church.			Date of Formation.	Date of Chapel or Site.
Brinkworth	...	...	1824	... 1828
Cricklade	...	...	1824	... 1856
Broad Town	...	...	1824	... 1827
Wootton Bassett	...	...	1825	... 1831
Goatacre	...	...	1827	... 1867
Clack	...	...	1825	... 1828
Hook	...	...	1827	... 1886
Tockenham	...	...	1828	... 1863
Grittenham	...	...	1827	... 1894
Purton	...	...	1828	... 1843
Greenhill (afterwards Lydiard)		1828		... 1863
Purton Stoke	...	...	1830	... 1832
Preston	...	...	1830	... 1906
Bushton	...	...	1843 etc.	1874
Ashton Keynes	...	1833-4	...	1841
Winterbourne (Barwick)	...	1833-4	...	1904
Gospel Oak (Leigh)	...	1835	...	1860
Minety	...	...	...	1863
Braydon	...	...	...	1889
Broad Hinton	...	...	1838 etc.	1907
Callow Hill	...	...	...	1889

Allowing for a few years for strength to be developed this list affords some striking instances of hope deferred and efforts unavailing. Oftentimes, as everyone knows, to obtain a cottage, or even a barn or shed, was equally impossible. The old spirit of sectarian opposition is not quite dead yet. At this moment there lies in the writer's pocket book a letter containing a landowner's statement, in response to an application, that he objects "to any meetings of any kind being held in any of my cottages." Thereby hangs a tale, in which the laugh is on our side, but this is not the time to tell it, lest others suffer.

Up to 1844, the date we have previously noted as one of the Circuit's greatest strength, it had only been possible to erect twelve chapels in all the thirty or forty places included in the present Brinkworth and Swindon Circuits; the rest of the churches were still worshipping in rented rooms of all kinds or in private dwellings. The busiest period of chapel building was 1856 to 1868, when Purton (2nd), Cricklade, Purton Stoke (2nd), Leigh, Minety, Lydiard, Goatacre, and Tockenham were built, and also the Jubilee Chapel at Brinkworth. But on and on through the years, the Circuit authorities had put forth all strength to secure sites. Deputations, memorials, letters, were sent and sent again, and only after long long waiting at Grittenham, Tockenham, Lydiard, Hook, Winterbourne, Goatacre,

Preston, did the Church obtain its site. The Death or the financial embarrassment of the opponent alone in several cases, opened the way.

The photographs found in this volume indicate very clearly, that the style of chapel, and the size thereof, were determined by strict necessity alone. All the early ones were plain village chapels. In the later ones a little more than "four walls and a ceiling" was attempted, and the improvements of recent date have made them fairly comfortable and attractive both inside and out. Still, in valuing them,

it is to be remembered that many of
THE CHAPELS. them are way-side chapels. Save a few, every village is a scattered one, and the population small; the little chapel has largely met all necessities, and, generally, luxuries were unattainable. During the first twenty years at least of our history, the wages of farm laborers, or "journeymen farmers" as Rev. Stewart Hooson used to say, were only some six to eight shillings for a full week's work, and very often of course that was not obtainable. The comparatively high wages of to-day are of quite recent experience, and high faith was necessary in the past in order to give sufficiently to carry on the work of building at all. Fortunately all classes of workers are combined in the Primitive Methodism of North Wilts. Considering the times, the needs, the opportunities, the verdict of Rev. S. Turner in the early fifties was deserved:—"the

chapels erected are a credit to the Circuit." The beautiful little chapel built at Winterbourne in 1904, is perhaps a forerunner of the style of the future.

3. LIBERALITY.

Brinkworth Circuit prides itself on its liberality. Like all good Methodist Circuits it is convinced that a grateful heart will make gifts for the support of God's cause. In the measure of financial support of its ministers, it claims to lead generally, circuits of its class, and very often the claim could be sustained. Through all its career, the appeal of any distressed chapel case has been heartily responded to. Coopers Gardens, Rochdale, Oxford, and many other chapels received donations from the Circuit Funds in their day of need, or a special collection was appointed to be made throughout the Circuit on their behalf. It may be stated, tho' it is not to be made much of, that the support of its Missions, from 1829 to 1857, from the Berkshire Mission to the Malmesbury Mission, brought a charge on its funds of £800 or £900, which even in its times of depression, was cheerfully given, that sinful men might have the gospel preached unto them. From the beginning it established a Circuit Charitable Fund, which continues and helps to this day. Since the cessation of its own missions, it has been noted for its liberal support of the Missionary Funds. One of the first Circuits to declare its decision to send up all its missionary money to the

Central Fund, it has ever since been a good Missionary Circuit; over a hundred pounds a year (to the two funds) has often been sent. Rarely it happened that the ministers' salaries were deficient, but when that did occur, in the thirties, record was made, and the back salaries were carefully paid. Connexional institutions, such as The Institute, were supported from their inception. Extravagance was and is unthought of, but needs are met, and often a little over. Especially in times of distress, through sickness, etc., has the sympathy been quick, perhaps quicker than justice at other times, and a grant has been forthcoming. "A Balance in Hand" in all quarters is the most frequent experience. Its hospitality has always been great. The early preachers, who suffered much in all ways, were, like all their successors, heartily welcomed in the homes—homes which very much helped to make the Circuit. If at first a "meal bill" for each unmarried minister was necessary at each quarter-day, it was of **MEAL** very small dimensions. With increase of **BILLS**. worldly goods, friendship and hospitality kept pace, and Mr. I. S. Nullis records that "the friends in the Brinkworth Circuit consider it a disgrace to have a Board Bill," and kept open house for the ministers everywhere. To-day, when there is no need either for ministers or people to think of the Board Bill, the hospitality is as ready as could possibly be desired, and giving and receiving it are practised by all.

4. EDUCATION.

In China the *feet* are bound, and so stunted. In England the fetters are upon the *brain*—the feet and hands may grow. Not brains but bodies the governing classes have desired for their service. For themselves they have filched many University Colleges and Schools which were founded for all, but their stupidity often remains. Love of man, as well as knowledge, is required to make intelligence, and in love they have been tremendously lacking. Why give knowledge to the “lower orders” when it is only work that is required. Stupid governing classes! Not able to see the Man! Blind to the Image of God! Not knowing that “all men are brothers,” and, as a consequence, starving their own souls. Where Primitive Methodism triumphs the brain fetters must be broken, and this

DAY not for narrow sectarian purposes.
SCHOOLS. Before the boastful State Church had thought of such a thing, our Wootton Bassett, Broad Town, Purton, Brinkworth and Cricklade churches had established Day-schools, and do not speak to-day of “the sacrifices for Education.” The Circuit Ministers took regular rounds of appointments to give religious instruction of a denominational kind—at the expense of the Church and not the rates, and if necessary would do it again.

A former minister of the Circuit has been heard to declare that “the strength of the Brinkworth

Circuit lies in its Sunday Schools." This testimony is to a great extent true. From the beginning, attention was paid to the young. The Quarterly Meetings of the Circuit very early decided that every effort should be made to establish Sunday Schools. The S. Schools to-day are well staffed, but as to the accommodation provided the commendation would not be true. Large Sunday Schools, with many classes, at work in one small chapel, find great difficulty in doing efficient work, and in this matter

the Brinkworth Circuit cannot boast at REFORM all; it is not advanced as it should be. A NEEDED. beginning of improvement has been made,

but in spite of its past creditable record in Sunday School work, it is to be prayed for that a Sunday School Reform Era may soon dawn. An infants' room, and classrooms for senior classes, are urgent necessities in all but the small schools, and it is time to arise and build.

5. TEMPERANCE.

To abstain from the use of intoxicants as a beverage, is the duty of all Christians in these enlightened days, and a Church has not reached maturity from which Temperance organisations and work are lacking. During the past eighteen years a great improvement has taken place in the Temperance sentiment of this Circuit. Then, quite a powerful opposition was manifested against the earnest

Temperance advocate; to-day, the Bands of Hope are gathering their harvest, and the moderate drinker is on his defence. For long, beer had a place on the Quarterly Meeting dinner table, and not in small quantities; a barrel was consumed thereat as late as 1838. Publicans were found among the most influential officials, and the growth of the anti-intoxicant movement was very gradual at first. It is surprising that it was so. In one year, 1834-5, no less than eight officials had been turned **BARRELS** out for drunkenness, one of whom had **OF ALE.** been a minister; while others had to be frequently admonished. Perhaps this resolution of the Quarterly Meeting of March 1843, is the first indication of an awakening to the need of reform: "That our Local Preachers be requested to avoid going to Public Houses on Sundays." No doubt, for some of our young people to read this will be somewhat of a shock, if new, but it must be remembered that this was in accordance with the universal sentiment and practices of those times.

The Temperance advocate amongst the local preachers soon appears, but he is forbidden to deliver teetotal lectures in any of our chapels.
TEMPERANCE He makes a vigorous protest; others
MILITANT. back him up, including some of the Travelling Preachers, and in a twelve month the first official sanction and support is given

by a resolution, December 1844, that "a teetotal meeting be held next Quarter Day in the chapel at Wootton Bassett; and that the travelling preachers who are teetotallers conduct it." The protest and zeal of W. P. of Stratton, referred to above, came to light in an intercepted private letter, which was copied into the Minute Book. A few extracts will be permissible. W. P. says, "I believe there is a decided hostility in many parts of the Circuit to "little drop men." . . . Its principal officials are of the "wee drappie sort." . . . We of the Branch of Teetotallers will necessarily have to encounter hardships of one kind or another. . . . The affinity of teetotalism with the Gospel has long been demonstrated, and as it has its rise from so good a source it will move onward in spite of opposition. . . . I have received a Note from Quarter Day on account of what I said, . . . Beware of *the little drop leaven* in your quarter." Some hard words were used therein, but the teetotalism is good. This indicates a stout fight going forward, but the victory quickly came to the right party, and the host of those who now abstain is great.

Thus, the Making of the Circuit, with all its glorious ministry. As a result, Heaven's begun below for thousands, and has been fully entered into above. The sacrifices made were sacrifices of joy. The good that has been wrought blots out the pain

of toil. The persecutions, the toil over the sermon, the giving of "every penny we'd got to the collection," and going out "to earn more for bread," the patient labor of years,—all these things are small in comparison with the rich reward of the Master served; and the heritage is great.

CHAPTER VI.

The Makers of the Circuit.

A MEMOIR of Charles Matthews of Brinkworth declares that "He made the cause of God his own." Such are the Makers of the Church in all ages, and of such Brinkworth Circuit has furnished many examples. The names of many of the greatest (of which God only is true Awarder) are unknown; and the names of many others cannot be recorded; only the most conspicuous can be given. First in the order of Time stand

THE MISSIONARIES

and with them we may associate at once the long line of Ministers who have succeeded them.

The first of them, Mr. Heath, has been referred to as going about "with his one sermon," but that must not be misunderstood. His "one sermon" was

his special "opening" sermon. It spoke terribly of heaven and hell, sin and judgment, and was a great awakening sermon. He was a man of great personal magnetism. Mr. Vaughan, the second missionary sent, was of only "moderate intellectual attainments, but full of zeal and did good work," while the third, Mr. R. Davies, was highly endowed, full of evangelistic fervour also, and became Connexional Book Steward, holding that important office from 1859-65. Of the rest, only a little can be said of a few, but these may be taken as samples, though it be conceded that the samples are specially good.

John Ride, of Weston Underwood, Derbyshire, received the joy of forgiveness while crossing the fields on his way home from a Class Meeting, which he had begun to attend. Hugh Bourne, ever keen to see a "preacher in the making," soon marked him as one who ought to preach. He began in JOHN July 1816 at a Camp Meeting. He returned RIDE. from America to which he had emigrated, in 1820, a widower. He became a "Missionary" on the powerful Cheshire (Burland) Mission; then to Liverpool, where he was sent to prison, but soon liberated; thence to Frome and so to Brinkworth, the beginning of his great career as a Pioneer of the South. His was undoubtedly the great "Forward Spirit" of the Brinkworth District from that time for sixteen years. He was Organiser and Evangelist too. Mr. Kendall gives words that sum up the

man from the beginning to the end. He quotes from one who saw him and knew his work in the twenties :—“Oh, how he did labour! His zeal seemed to have no bounds.” Thus was John Ride always.

Samuel West was twice the superintendent of the Brinkworth Circuit, and the senior of the two Missionaries who founded our Church in Bristol. He was equally successful “in conserving ground already occupied or in entering new fields.” He was born at Copper Ridge Farm, Motcombe, Devon, in 1805, and died early in 1867. His last station was Brinkworth.

Joseph Preston entered the Circuit at its weakest period. At the end of his five years, the Circuit reported 600 increase of members, and seven additional travelling preachers were sent out. He took in hand the Wootton Bassett “Golden System” and firmly established it in the Circuit. A man of great energy and devotion, he lived to a ripe age and died in triumph.

William Driffield, a strong man, is described as “the finest preacher ever in the Circuit, and he wore top boots.” The Minute Books he has left behind mark him as a man brusque and firm.

Samuel Turner was at the first a most successful pioneer, and then one of the strongest superintendents



1. Mr. S. WESTMACOTT. 2. Mrs. GINGELL. 3. Rev. H. YEATES.
4. Mr. & Mrs. W. WEST. 5. Mr. H. HITCHCOCK. 6. Rev. G. WALLIS.
7. Rev. W. DRIFFIELD. 8. Mr. JAS. HASKINS. 9. Rev. J. PETTY.

of the Brinkworth District. He was spoken of often as "the gentlemanly Samuel Turner." So he was, and as such he endured hardships, and before magistrates insisted on his citizen rights. When these did not help him he preached without counting the cost. An account given of one of his removals at "changing time" will give us a sidelight into ministerial experience of the early times

A that should not be omitted. "In REMOVAL. going to Banbury (1848), the journey had to be taken by carrier's van, which, in the afternoon pulled up at a wayside inn just in time to avoid a heavy thunderstorm, which lasted some hours. The evening was advancing before the preacher, his wife, and their five children, one a three weeks old infant, could renew their journey." In 1851, stationed to Brinkworth Circuit, he refused to live at the village, for which he was probably never quite forgiven by the officials. His decision was wise, nevertheless, and his going to Swindon much helped the somewhat feeble society of that day in this important town. It is said that many who were in contact with Mr. Turner as young ministers, remember him as a strict disciplinarian.

William Hazell, "feared neither man nor devil," and conquered the spiteful efforts of bigotry at Lydiard. George Wallis was a native of Wootton Bassett, converted there, and a "diplomatic" super. Some of his sons became ministers also.

Of the others, each made his mark, and is held in grateful remembrance. The place of the Ministers as true Makers of the Circuit no one would dream of questioning, and the respect they have won, the co-operation they have received, and the work they have been able, in consequence, to accomplish, has been their great reward. Rumors come down from the past that sometimes officials forgot themselves and occupied considerable time in "dealing with the ministers"; forgot the respect due to the ministerial office, and gave much needless and undeserved pain to the men who filled it. It *has* happened in Circuits, that what we may call "A Lay Superintendent" has taken up the role of superintending the ministers and the Circuit. He generally ended badly. In the Brinkworth Circuit there is no record of such, and it may be taken that the ministers and the laymen of the past were generally, what they are to-day,—Comrades in arms, without mutual antagonism, and only seeking, under God, to work together as Makers of the Circuit,—to save men.

It will be convenient here to give a list of the Ministers who have "travelled" in the Circuit from the beginning, with dates. The letters in brackets (B), etc., indicate the places of Residence:

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------|
| (B) Brinkworth | (s) Seagry |
| (w) Wootton Bassett | (Sw) Swindon |
| (c) Cricklade | |
| (M) means Missionary | |

Dates.	Names of Ministers.
1827-28.	S. Heath, G. Holloway, E. Foizey, J. Kellett M. Cutler.
1828-29.	J. Ride (w), R. Jukes (s), J. Moore (s), E. Smith (s).
1829-30.	J. Ride (w), J. Bell (s), J. Moore (s), J. Petty and R. Jukes (<i>missionaries</i>), T. Russell (w), E. Smith (w), W. Towler (m), N. Watkins.
1830-31.	J. Bell (w), T. Adams (w), J. Ride, T. Russell J. Hurd & E. Smith (<i>missionaries</i>), J. Evans (w).
1831-32.	S. West (s), J. Hurd (s), M. Harding (s), T. Adams (s), S. Harding (s), J. Bell (w), E. Smith (w).
1832-33.	S. West (s), T. Powell (s), S. Turner (m) (s), A. Sly (s), J. Baker (s), J. Coxhead, J. Parsons, J. Crowage.
1833-34.	W. Strongman (s), J. Baker (w), J. Black- more (w), J. Wigley (w), W. Sadler (w).
1834-35.	W. Strongman, C. Day, W. Watts, J. Blackmore, A. Hodgson, J. Garbutt, E. Rawlings.
1835-36.	J. Garbutt (w), T. Williams (w), E. Rawl- lings (w), B. Trip (w), H. Passmore (w), S. Timmins (w).
1836-37.	J. Garbutt (w), S. Timmins (w), E. Rawlings (w).
1837-38.	J. Preston (B), J. Excell (B), J. Maylard (B), C. Ferris.
1838-39.	J. Preston (B), W. Nation (B), J. Lewis (B), J. Excell (B).

Dates.	Names of Ministers.
1839-40.	J. Preston (B), J. Holloway (B), R. Hill (B), J. Godwin (B), J. Tayler (B).
1840-41.	J. Preston (B), C. Brevitt (B), J. Tayler (B), J. Stroud (B), J. Brooks (B), J. Campion (B).
1841-42.	J. Preston (B), J. Best (B), J. Campion (B), E. Minton (B).
1842-43.	W. Driffield (B), T. Meredith (B), E. Minton (B), W. Nation (B), T. Green (B), J. Brooks (B).
1843-44.	W. Driffield (B), T. Burgess (B), H. Buss (B), T. Green (B), G. Eudall (B), N. Tranter (B).
1844-45.	W. Driffield (B), T. Green (B. s. w), T. Burgess (B), N. Tranter (B), H. Heys (w), W. Knock (s).
1845-46.	W. Driffield (B), H. Heys (w), W. Knock (s), G. Brewer (w), H. Platt (w).
1846-47.	W. Driffield (B), I. Hedges (w), W. Knock (w), W. Osgood (w), H. Platt (w), C. Boulton (w), J. Fuller (w).
1847-48.	E. Bishop (B), I. Hedges (w), J. Knight (w), J. Fuller (w).
1848-49.	E. Bishop (B), I. Hedges (w), J. Fuller (w).
1849-50.	T. Cummin (B), I. Hedges (w), J. Fuller (w).
1850-51.	T. Cummin (B), W. Hazell (w), J. Knight (Sw), S. Osmond (w).
1851-53.	S. Turner (Sw), J. Willimot (B), W. Hazell (w), S. Osmond (w).
1853-55.	S. Turner (Sw), G. Eudall (B), L. Dobinson (w), G. Warner (w) (M).

Dates.	Names of Ministers.
1855-56.	G. Wallis (Sw), J. S. Brown (B), G. Waite (w), G. Warner (M), G. Beale (B), I. S. Nullis (w).
1856-57.	G. Wallis (Sw), J. S. Brown (B), G. Waite (w), G. Warner (M), I. S. Nullis (w), G. Beale (w).
1857-58.	G. Wallis (Sw), T. Powell (M), G. Beale (w), D. Day (B).
1858-59.	S. West (Sw), D. Day (B), J. Herridge (w), T. Powell (M).
1859-60.	S. West (w), J. Herridge (Sw), J. Hill (B).
1860-61.	W. Hazell (Sw), S. West (w), J. Hill (B), T. Grace (w).
1861-62.	W. Hazell (w), J. Hill (B), G. Morgan (Sw), S. Clarke (c).
1862-63.	W. Hazell (w), G. Fowler (B), G. Morgan (Sw), S. Clarke (c).
1863-65.	T. Powell (w), G. Fowler (B), E. Alford (Sw), C. Portnall (c).
1865-66.	T. Powell (w), T. Kench (B), E. Alford (Sw), J. Neville (w).
1866-67.	T. Powell (w), J. Bendle (B), L. Norris (Sw), J. Neville (w).
1867-68.	T. Jackson (w), J. Bendle (B), L. Norris (Sw), J. Neville (w), [J. Ford (B), C. Anthony (c)].
1868-69.	T. Jackson (w), J. Ford (B), L. Norris (Sw), C. Anthony (c).
1869-70.	T. Jackson (w), J. Ford (B), N. Watts (Sw), C. Anthony (c).

Dates.	Names of Ministers.
1870-72.	H. Platt (w), N. Watts (Sw), H. Portnall (B), J. H. Green (c).
1872-73.	H. Platt (w), H. Portnall (B), J. H. Green (c), T. Pinnoch (Sw).
1873-75.	H. Platt (w), W. Sheasby (B), T. Pinnock (Sw), T. Saunders (c).
1875-76.	H. Yeates (w), R. Taylor (B), T. Pinnock (Sw), T. Saunders (c).
1876-77.	H. Yeates (w), R. Taylor (B), T. Pinnock (Sw), J. Squires (c).
1877-79.	H. Yeates (w), G. Litten (B).
1879-80.	S. Hooson (w), G. Litten (B).
1880-83.	S. Hooson (w), J. E. Sunderland (B).
1883-84.	S. Hooson (w), T. Phelps (B).
1884-85.	L. Norris (w), T. Phelps (B).
1885-88.	L. Norris (w), J. Badminton (B).
1888-91.	D. Harding (w), W. L. Taylor (B).
1891-94.	J. Neville (w), J. Sheppard (B).
1894-95.	J. Neville (w), W. Haddow (B).
1895-98.	T. Kench (w), W. Haddow (B) (w), E. Simpkins (B).
Mr. Kench died at Wootton Bassett, October 1897.	
1898-1901.	W. Haddow (w), J. A. Snaith (B).
1901-02.	S. Ainsworth (w), F. H. Brown (B).
1902-04.	S. Ainsworth (w), E. Parsons (B).
1904-05.	W. C. Tonks (w), W. Haddow (B), F. J. Harper (B).
Mr. Haddow died October 1904.	
1905-	W. C. Tonks (w), A. Marshall (B).

After the Missionary, his first supports from among his converts in the building up of the Church, comes the Local Preacher and the Class Leader. In the history of Methodism, these two have ever been of vital necessity ; and ever will be as long as Methodism seeks for the highest path of usefulness. Without the former, the evangelistic ministry would lack recruits, and the best vein of pulpit power would be unused ; without the latter, the individual member of the churches would lack nourishment. The popularity and respect a good local preacher achieves is in need of no argument, while a good Class leader is ever a Bishop beloved, an Under Shepherd, whom the sheep delight to follow.

THE LOCAL PREACHER

has had a great place in the developement of the Brinkworth Circuit. His quality has been varied both as to zeal and ability ; men with one sermon tho' many texts, and men with no sermon at all. Others who never missed appointments, and others who suffered from Sunday sickness ; fair-weather preachers and preachers ever-reliable. We have these last to-day ; and we have men who will ride, on horse or bicycle, or drive through over twenty miles of rain to honor "small" village appointments, and men who will take weeknight appointments as well as on Sunday, at a considerable expense of strength and comfort. Two by two in the days past they often

went to mission or re-mission a village, and as was said of Henry Curtis, of Leigh, "have often had a rotten egg up agen the side of *hees* head." Men of resource, they were able to sing down a village street alone in the darkness and rain (such an instance has occurred within the last twelve-month), and if not very musical, of sufficient courage to sing the same tune to six different hymns rather than stick fast.

The training of Local preachers in the past was not very much systematised, but help was continually rendered by ministers and others. As we have read, "Usefulness is better than polish, but improvement must not be neglected ;" a keen edge is better than a blunt one on any axe, and to a hammer

TRAINING. a good handle is essential. The training classes of to-day are proving very beneficial. The intellectual standard of the local preacher has already been raised thereby, while no barrier is placed in the way of any one who "ought to preach." The young man who cannot prepare himself for these examinations, must be much lacking in mental capacity or zeal, and would not be likely to do much service on the Plan. This, to some extent, the Circuit has always borne in mind, and as far back as 1860 e.g., we have a resolution of Quarterly Meeting that "Mr. Gantlett give a lecture at the next Quarterly Meeting on the means to be used for the improvement of our lay ministry." Men with well furnished minds like those of the Circuit Steward

of the present day or Mr. J. Haskins of Purton, have done much to keep up the intellectual standard in particular, and men of keen intelligence coupled with whole hearted zeal like the late "George Hatter," as everybody knew him, have let the mantle fall upon the Suttons and Youngs of to-day. The fullest knowledge, the keenest thought, the fieriest heart:—these are the equipment required for the local preacher, and such precious gifts that such men are, we pray the Lord of the harvest to continue to send.

THE CLASS LEADER

in Methodism is as essential as the preacher. Theirs is a great task—difficult to perform, but great in its results. Spiritual oversight is a delicate undertaking, requiring great honesty and wisdom. Like the preacher, the Class Leaders life should be very clean, and his knowledge of the Bible and of human nature extensive. A preacher must not exhort a converted congregation to "Turn to the Lord," nor must a Class Leader exhort to regular attendance at the Means of Grace, one who never stays away. But if a Class Leader has gained the confidence of his members, the way is always open for reproof, for correction, for encouragement, for counsel. The Class Leader is a Leader in the Spiritual, and needs to be full of faith, and hope and love. He should know, as intimately as possible, the spiritual experience of every member of his class, and in the secret

chamber of many a Class Leader's heart is the memory of help he has given that has saved from falling. Year in and year out, the Leaders labor; much of their work is unseen, but it is the saving work of the societies. Men like Mr. Sweeper, Mr. E. L. Gardner, and the Wests, father and son, are great conserving forces in their societies; may their numbers increase.

To pass from these details to a more general view, there are men who in the history of the Circuit, have been known by the Circuit, and looked up to as men who were makers of the Circuit and whose building was visible to all. Apart from those who may be mentioned later there were men who, like

Mr. Henry Hitchcock, of Brinkworth,
THE SOCIETY MAN. were typical Builders of their own Societies. He loved the Connexion, the Circuit, and that love was rooted in the love of his own church at Brinkworth. When he died, he had been doing so much for so long that his loss was most keenly felt. He served the Church and the community, better than he served his own fortune, and was a tower of strength to those who sought righteousness. The longer he lived, the more wide and deep the respect he gained, and the strength and influence of Brinkworth Church owed very much to him. He is a type of many. The strength of the Brinkworth Circuit lies here—it has never failed for long to produce, when wanted, its Society Man or

Woman. We think of the Matthews' of Brinkworth, the Wests of Braydon and Minety, the Miles' and Humphries' of Broad Town, Eli Holloway and George Hatter of Tockenham, Franklin of Clack, Turners of Winterbourne, Blackmans of Goatacre, and a galaxy of such men and women at Wootton Bassett and Purton and elsewhere in the past and present. Men and women these who "hold things together," with music in their hearts, and with courage and persistence and geniality as their main characteristics.

Others have been particularly known for their work in the Circuit Courts. Mr. S. Gantlett of Wootton Bassett might be taken as a type.

THE CIRCUIT MAN. He was Circuit Steward from 1861 till he died—for over twenty years. "His judgment was sound and was respected. His business habit and ready grasp of the various questions raised in official meetings rendered his presence always important; so that he was generally consulted and his views ascertained. He made his mark as a thoroughly efficient laymen of the Primitive Methodist Connexion." Other names come before us; Mr. Ind and J. Smith of Wootton Bassett, in the distant past; the Rummings and C. Morse of the middle period, and the Westmacotts, C. Gardner, and the Circuit Men of the present day. Such fitness have the Brinkworth "Circuit Men" shown that it has become an understanding in the

District Committees that it is always perfectly "safe to sanction any application that comes from Brinkworth—it is sure to be sound in all particulars."

Mr. J. Sweeper is a man of many parts, and may be taken as a type of the Connexional Man of the Circuit. His work at home is great, but it has extended widely too.

THE CONNEXIONAL MAN. Very often a Member of the District Meeting, he has four times represented the District in Conference, and has the privilege of being selected as a preacher at the Mow Cop Centenary Camp Meeting now in progress (May 25-27, 1907). As a Member of the Connexional Sunday School Committee for many years, he has played a worthy part in the development of Connexional Sunday School Life.

A very important item in the Making of any Circuit is the Singing of the Songs of Zion, and men and women who have been able "to start a tune," have been great helpers as

THE MUSICIAN. makers of the Circuit. In every Society these have been very valuable in the past, and the position they occupied was a strong one. In spite of instruments of music, the need for them is almost as great to-day as ever. Indeed, one would like to see special attention paid to this matter, and the rise of more young men and women who are masters of tunes of the right sort, that "go well" in

prayer meeting and class meeting. Class leaders would do well to seek out and train those who can "strike a tune" anywhere and anywhen. What a fine help at the Camp Meetings and Processionings ("This Circuit abounds in Processioning," said Hugh Bourne,) were Edmund Belcher, Eli Holloway, Thomas Chun. There is not one living who can "hold a candle" to them. The Primitive Methodist Singing Man is a fine production, and invaluable to any church or Circuit—the full voice, the correct ear and taste, the quick sense of the appropriate—these are his marks.

One of the most valuable "makers" has been Mr. C. Maslin of Wootton Bassett. In addition to other work, he has specialised on "Debt reduction," and in the surrounding villages, has for many years greatly stimulated this work.

A DEBT REDUCER. He is known as "a ter'ble man to get debts paid off." At Wootton Bassett also he has done admirably in this direction, and as "a giver and a getter" is a good type of those who prevent financial worry and difficulty.

The Makers of the Circuit are often times to be found in families as well as scintillating in solitary greatness, and brief notes may be given of a few of these. At a Lovefeast conducted by Rev. S. Turner in 1832, Miss Ferris, who was socially well-connected,

was converted. She was known as being "gay and dressy," but on her conversion this was at once altered to "becoming plainness." Mr. Smith, to whom she was afterwards married, and her sister, were also brought to God at that time. Mr. and Mrs. Smith

took an active and leading part in
NOTED FAMILIES. Primitive Methodism; they were both local preachers; their house was always open to God's servants; they did much in all ways to help build a good substantial sanctuary in 1838, and in the establishment of Day Schools. It is said that Mrs. Smith "upon principle, gave £50 yearly to religious and benevolent purposes" and often more.

The Humphries family, with the heads, Samuel, Jacob and Isaac, of Broad Town and Wootton Bassett, was another of the strong. At the height of their power, their influence was very great, and their generosity much helped the various building projects of that time. Mr. Isaac Humphries was for seven years a travelling preacher, and Mrs. L. L. Morse, his daughter, was born in the historic preacher's house at Shefford. His daughters at Broad Town worthily follow in the steps of their pious and zealous parents.

The family of the Rummings has been described by our friend Rev. G. Fowler as "A Remarkable Family of Free Churchmen," William Rumming,

father of Mr. W. Rumming of Pitt's lands ; James Rumming, John Rumming, Thomas Rumming of Hook Farm, Henry Rumming and Jacob Rumming of Ponds Farm, Purton Stoke. Of these, William, Thomas and James were best known in this Circuit ; though Mr. Jacob Rumming, a Congregationalist, was also well known, a good helper, and highly esteemed. At Grittenham, Mr. Wm. Rumming lived an influential life, great and good ; Mr. Jas. Rumming was a minister for five years and then returned to farming, and lived at Purton ; Mr. Thos. Rumming occupied an influential official position in the Circuit for many years, helping especially the churches at Hook and Lydiard. Than the family at Pitt's Lands to-day, there is none more highly respected.

CHAPTER VII.

Side-Lights from Minute Books, etc.

A GREAT deal can be seen through a small window, and if the windows be well placed and there be enough of them, the whole may be viewed, tho' in parts. We have been taking large views of Circuit Life. In this chapter we look not from the top of the tower, but from the windows thereof, and through the sharpshooters' chink, and take piece-meal views of men and things.

In Primitive Methodism the Quarterly Meeting of the Circuit is of the highest interest and importance.

The appointment of these meetings on QUARTERLY MEETINGS. the old plans and in the minute books has several surprising items for moderns. First, perhaps, we are struck by the inordinately early hour at which the



1. Rev. J. SHEPPARD 2. Rev. W. HARGREAVE 3. Rev. T. KENCH
 4. Mr. R. GOFFING 5. Mrs. BLACKMAN 6. Mr. C. GARDNER
 7. Mr. JAS. LUMMING 8. Mr. TOM LUMMING 9. Mr. J. HITCHCOCK

brethren met, and then at the great length of time required to do the business of the first section of the Quarterly Meeting. Eight o'clock in the morning was the most common time of meeting ; seven and nine are quite frequent, and six a.m. was the hour sometimes for commencement. From this hour the meeting went on all day. The preachers meeting was ordered to be closed not later than two p.m. Six hours or more for the preachers Meeting ! The rest of the business held the good people till the evening service. Very frequently and for many years the Meetings were held at Mr. Ind's at Whitehill Farm ; and at Broad Town, the spare bedroom, prepared for the occasion of course, at Marsdon Farm (Mr. Miles') was the scene of Quarterly Meetings—Hugh Bourne being in attendance more than once. It would be too much to expect "that things were done quickly or always in harmony." "Bread and cheese" dinners were established in 1834, and "Flesh" dinners later, and other stuff was provided that need not again be mentioned. Accounts that have come down from comparatively recent times of these all day Quarterly Meetings show that the brethren had "a good time" at the tables if not in the business, and in such comfortable circumstances, hours passed rapidly.

Orderliness and despatch in business were not easily obtainable sometimes ; how to do business had to be learned. Let us peep through the following

"chinks" from the Minute Books. "That there be no private conversation," indicates that more meetings than the authorised one were **EVOLUTION.** going on at the same time. "That

Bro. T. be allowed till 4 p.m. to finish reading the minutes" shows determination on his part to probe matters to the bottom, tho' it is evident that the Meeting was inconvienced thereby. Some brethren evidently had a too great desire for the minutes to be read, for it is decided "that the minutes be not read any more till the close of the meeting for anybody"—the business can't be stopped *too* often or it will never get done. If a preacher neglected to make the collection he had to pay a forfeit, and even "to pay the amount himself."

Secrecy had to be maintained and so no **FORFEITS.** person "shall leave the meeting without permission on pain of forfeiting two-pence." If travelling preachers published any of the transactions of the Quarterly Meeting "so as to cause trouble" they were to be fined five shillings, and local preachers equally wicked were to be deprived of "the liberty of attending Quarterly Meetings for twelve months." Bro. S. or Bro. K. was appointed to collect the forfeits, and there is no trace of Passive Resistance.

Travelling Preachers unfortunately received much attention in those days. Annual Reports had to be filled up giving minute accounts of the T.P.s. The

questions asked were, among others : Is he capable of superintending a circuit ? Is he attentive to discipline ? Is he a smoker of tobacco ?

THE P.M. Is he a long preacher ? Is he in debt ?

INQUISITION. Is he a peaceable man? etc. *ad nauseam*.

They must have been *very* peaceable to have borne all that, frequently inflicted. The New Testament idea of a Minister is as far from that kind of treatment as the North Pole is from the South, and it is well that it now prevails. "That the preachers be paid their back salaries in books" reminds us at once of the time when the Circuits managed the Magazine and Hymnal sales, and of the self-denial the T.P.s. were ever practising. Town houses "at 2/- a week," with the "young men" living with their supers is another "light" upon those days; four ministers lived in the house where Mrs. P. Webb now lives at Brinkworth. Grand old times ! But not a note of complaint is recorded in the Journals of the preachers. The love of Christ filled their hearts, and they and their wives were prepared to "bear all things" for Him. Gifts of "a ton of coal," "a present of 10/-," "an allowance of 13/- for plan-making week," etc., lightened the burden a little now and again.

The supply of appointments in a large Circuit has always been a difficulty. To avoid NEGLECTS. neglects our fathers adopted various devices. In cases of inability to go "a preacher must get a supply"; then, "he must send

word to the Circuit Committee, or "to the Circuit Steward," or "to the Minister," and now we have returned to the first of these, which is the best after all. Punishment was inflicted by ruling "that for every neglect a preacher shall sink one figure on the plan." So every Quarterly Meeting for many years resolves "that Bro. S. sink one figure," "that Bro. S. sink," or that Bro. S. sink two figures." In Sept. 1858 it was decided that this rule "be done away with," but it still happened for several years that brethren who neglected "sank" or "dropped." At last it came to moral suasion only, to earnest reminders of "disappointed congregations," and to "regret that Bro. S. has neglected the congregation at —." Truly, if the thought of a waiting congregation does not appeal, nothing more can be done, save what our fathers did, and so in the event of continual neglect "the name of Bro. —" has to be removed from the Plan.

Cases of "Morals" occupied considerable time occasionally, and among the lighter cases those of "selling beer without a licence," "selling uncustomed goods," "pulling up two stakes from a plantation and being fined by the magistrates," were discreditable to the Church and brought expulsion from MORALS the plan, or from the society, upon the AND offenders. Serious cases were dealt with FASHIONS. quickly and firmly, and every determination is shown, as it ought to be, to keep the standard of Christian Morals high. Sometimes,

doubtless, Morals and Manners or Fashion were viewed as of almost equal importance. The Dress of members and of the preachers troubled the minds of our fathers. Beauty in dress was earnestly avoided. "Let it be plain" was the motto. Concerning ministers, the question was asked annually, "Does he conform to rule as to the style of his hair and dress?" Therefore we have it "That a request be made to District Meeting that preachers be not allowed to wear cloaks." These cloaks got on the nerves of some, for "Bro. Ind is chargeable with having called Bro. Harris' cloak the **Devil's Cloak**, mark that." Bro. Ind continues to rave, and is respectfully asked "to preach the gospel to sinners and not to rail at his brethren;" "if he do not cease to make reflections on his brethren, his name shall come off the plan," and finally, wise resolution, "that W. Ind have liberty to raise a society at Wootton Bassett and train them to dress in his own way." That settled the good brother, for neither he nor his suggested society are heard of any more on this subject. Nevertheless, in spite of his eccentricities, Bro. Ind was a "fine man."

Here is a remarkable resolution of March 1835, "that Bro. W. B. have a note written to him concerning his sideboards." This stands "SIDEBOARDS." alone; we want light here. Was it wrong to wear sideboards, or not to wear them? If permissible, then this brother grew sideboards either too big or too little; which? One

wonders how long they debated this matter, this highly important business. This was seventy-two years ago, but it was matched some thirty years later by the following : "What do you say ? J——. S——. wears a moustache? If he do *I'll* not hear him preach." A peep through the door revealed the moustache, and the shaven veteran fled.

A series of items recur from the commencement into recent times similar to the following : "that we rent the house (for preaching) at Kempsford at £3 per year." This was an undertaking of difficulty and in Bro. Preston's time it was resolved "that the Brinkworth Circuit pay no more rent for rooms, no more *for ever*." But if rents were not paid, RENTS. grants were made, and a Circuit Chapel Fund formed, to which the Circuit Fund made contributions, and so building projects were materially assisted. This should be remembered by trustees, some of whom have not yet learned cheerfully to contribute to the Circuit Fund, in the time of their prosperity. The matter was dealt with by the Quarterly Meeting of March '44 thus : "that where chapels are out of debt, the chapel money shall be left at the disposal of Quarterly Meeting."

The following miscellaneous resolutions will contribute much to a view of the doings of our fathers. 1834: "that the travelling preachers remain another year with the exception that W. S. be

exchanged for a female!" "That no local preacher be appointed to preach twice in one place" was necessary so that the preacher might get near home for his evening appointment, after taking the distant ones morning or afternoon or both. "That every L. P. bring sixpence, or cause it to be brought, to next Quarter Day in aid of Stratton Chapel" shows another method of helping. 1835: "that a Fast Day be observed on Good Friday;" a frequent order was given for Fast Days, especially "Fasting and Prayer" for a Revival, or for a projected "Mission." "That Bro. S—'s name come off the plan, he having gone to Glory"—sometimes it was "because he has gone to the Happy Land." 1836 gives us: "that the word Rev. be not used by our preachers "Rev." in this Circuit on any account whatever," and so we have "Friend Preston," and Mr. Driffield goes one better and gives us "That Driffield" do so and so; the T.P.'s. don't want the Rev. "That Bro. Preston take the Plan," etc., is a reminder that both the printing and the making of the Plan caused "things to be said." In '37 steps had "to be taken to protect female preachers in going to their appointments." "That the preachers kneel during prayer" is a resolution of '39. "Long preaching" was a disease that brought its punishment, but was difficult to eradicate—penitence brought forgiveness. In '43 our L.P.'s were requested not to smoke tobacco as they walked the streets, and later Bro. B. had to "speak to Bro. C.

respecting smoking on the road." It is probable that for a number of years the preachers (T.P. and L.P.) had to be responsible for collections, etc., for it was in 1844 that it was decided "that there be Society Stewards at every place where we can obtain them." As early as '47 this Circuit is sending up "a petition to Parliament against the Sunday drinking and sale of intoxicating liquors." Disturbances of the preacher were not confined to outsiders, for we read

"that Bro. T. be informed by letter
DISTURBANCE. that he acted very improperly in his
remarks to Bro. W. while preaching
at Christian Malford Camp Meeting." "That Bro. F.
be removed from society for contracting debts without
a probability of paying them," and "that Bro. R. be
requested to desist from baking on Sundays, or he
must have no appointments," indicate very close
overseership fifty-five years ago. References to
"Passports" and "Toll Bars" remind us of the
fettered highways of the past. What an admirable
minute this is, "that Bro. S. be requested to attend
class and take his wife with him." Brethren, please
copy! And the next is alike delightful, "that this
meeting strongly disapproves of our members playing
at the game of Kissing in the Ring"; whoever dared
to suggest it we do not know, but a picture of the
grave and reverend members of the Quarterly Meeting
seriously considering this matter would be enough
to move the angels. In 1864, some brother was
evidently more than a passive resister against "long

preaching," for he had to be reproved "for taking the Bible away from the pulpit while Bro. J. was preaching." Or was it because Bro. J. was knocking the Bible to pieces? In either case it was a too emphatic and disturbing protest. The "Meal Bible" of early times has passed away by this year, and "all our Societies are requested to make provision for meals for local and travelling preachers." This was better than when W. Rowles and others had to dine on blackberries, and have a blackberry tea after, and supper at home at mid-night. Again we notice the care exercised in reference to travelling preachers; they were treated like Members of the Royal Family; "allowed" or "not allowed" to leave the Circuit by resolution of Quarterly Meeting. Did they take their "Ticket of Leave" with them? It was long before such a thing as a "holiday" was recognised; "a few days to go and see their friends" were given; but no one had holidays in the days gone by except tramps, landlords, civil clerks and such like. All places were

not equally liberal in support of the Circuit CLASS Funds, and now and again we find such MONEY. a minute as this, "that an inquiry be instituted at S—— relative to the small amount of Class money, etc." These people are dead, but have they no descendants? In '39, Mr. Preston records that "it takes me six weeks to go round the Home Branch of the Brinkworth Circuit, and then I don't go to every place." A reference to "illegal Circuit Committees" in 1876 is a reminder that

people in high places sometimes err; and "Votes of Thanks" to Mr. Gladstone for his work in reference to the Bulgarian Atrocities points to the encouragement that should always be given by Churches on great public moral questions.

Of destructive controversy the Station has been singularly free, but sharp battles have been fought in reference to "division" both of District and Circuit, and to retain its place and name as the "head of the District," the Circuit fought tenaciously. In March 1847 it is resolved "that Brinkworth

THE BRINKWORTH NAME. keep its place as the head of the District." The danger was avoided then, but in 1870 the fight waxed hot, and the Circuit records "astonishment and sorrow that the General Committee proposes or advises the division of the district, and sends its earnest and solemn protest against such a course." These are the reasons for such protest: 1. Because this district has missioned most of Bristol District and a considerable part of London District, at a cost of much toil, suffering, money and prayers. 2. To remove the name of Brinkworth from the head of this District, we cannot but look upon as an act of injustice which we think the Conference will not readily sanction. 3. It would be an act of lasting ingratitude to the executive of the district. 4. The "Break up of the District" would lead to such disaffection in several societies in this Circuit as

would lead to disastrous results. In 1876 a Committee was formed "to watch the interests of the Circuit against the attempts made by the Newbury Circuit to change the name of the District," and to this Committee thanks were afterwards given for their successful efforts. Newbury then, once the Shefford Circuit, the daughter of Brinkworth, is the foe ! Too bad, Newbury ! And so it was decided "that we deem it necessary to enter a complaint against Newbury Circuit for their treatment in this matter." The District was divided in 1893, after a fierce battle and "No Division" victory at the District Meeting held at Brinkworth itself in 1891. The name was retained, and Newbury finally routed in 1896 (tho' she submitted with good grace at last), when the loyal daughter Swindon added its name to that of the mother Circuit of Brinkworth as the District name. 'Twas a glorious fight, and the general verdict is that the right side won in both cases -the division of the District, and the retention of the name of Brinkworth at the head, were alike in the best interests of the work of God. Let Peace reign for ever !

Copy of a Preacher's Licence.

I, *John Hitchcock*, in the parish of Kington St. Michael, in the County of Wilts, do solemnly declare in the presence of Almighty God, that I am a Christian and a Protestant, and as such that I believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments

as commonly received among Protestant churches do contain the revealed Will of God, and that I do receive the same as the rule of my doctrine and practice.

I, *John Hitchcock*, do sincerely promise and swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to His Majesty, King William, so help me God.

I, *John Hitchcock*, do swear that I do, from my heart, detest and abhor and abjure, as impious and heretical that damnable doctrine and position that princes excommunicated by the Pope or any authority of the see of Rome, may be deposed or murdered by their subjects or any other whatsoever; and I do declare that no foreign prince, person, prelate, state or potentate hath or ought to have any jurisdiction, power, superiority, pre-eminence or authority, ecclesiastical or spiritual within this realm, so help me God.

I, *John Hitchcock*, do solemnly and sincerely declare in the presence of God, protest, testify and declare that I do believe that in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, there is not any transubstantiation of the elements of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, at or after the consecration thereof by any person whatsoever, and that the invocation and adoration of the Virgin Mary or any other saint, and the sacrifice of the mass, as they are now used in the Church of Rome are superstitious and idolatrous, and I do solemnly profess, testify and

declare, that I do make this declaration and every part thereof in the plain and ordinary sense of the words read unto me as they are commonly understood by English Protestants, without any evasion, qualification or mental reservation whatever, and without any dispensation already granted me for this purpose by the Pope, or any other authority or person whatsoever, and without any hope of any such dispensation from any person or authority whatsoever, or without thinking that I am or can be acquitted before God or man, or absolved of this declaration or any part thereof, although the Pope or any person or persons whatsoever shall dispense with or annul the same, or declare that it was null or void from the beginning.

(Signed) JOHN HITCHCOCK.

Magistrates Signature.

August 10th, 1833.

As in other churches, so here, the musical instrument has had to struggle for admission to a place in the church as an auxiliary to the singing. The new instrument at Broad Town, was found one morning in a pond. How it got there no one knows

to this day, but it got back again.

HARMONIUMS. At another place the effect of a night in the rain was tried, and quite a secession occurred at the same place when it was decided to have an instrument. In other cases the Harmonium was accepted after a first hearing, as "it couldn't do much harm anyhow."

The Circuit has also had its heresy hunt. A controversy theological raged thirty years ago. For the peace of one Society, the "heretics" were turned out, but were gladly welcomed into another, and

Messrs S. & H. Westmacott with others
HERESY. became great helpers at Ashton Keynes,

Purton Stoke and Purton. We will not blow upon the dead ashes of the controversy; suffice it to say that the Westmacotts and their friends led many to a more intelligent idea of the ways of God among men, and thus to a deeper reverence and love.

We may close this chapter fittingly with an account of a peculiar business transaction. One of the difficulties of Reformers has been that of securing

that men shall vote on the merits of a
SECRECY question, instead of playing the game of
OF "Follow my Leader." "Measures not
VOTING. Men" is the desirable principle, and the

Vote by Ballot is one attempt to secure the independent voter from undue influence. In church meetings, to get men to think and act for themselves is right, and especially if a leading spirit is in opposition. A case arose in which the Party of Reform was faced by a strong leader, whom many would blindly follow. On the merits of the case, the Reformers ought to win, and the children of light this time were wise in their generation. A hint to the "super" is enough; a few words of explanation as to

this novel way of voting, and then "Eyes Shut"; "Hands up those who approve of the motion"; and the point is gained, with much secret jubilation.

An account of an Old Time Camp Meeting.

By Revs. J. Ride and S. West.

"Brinkworth and Shefford Circuits, June 15th, 1834, held a Union Camp Meeting on Bishopstone Down, in Berkshire. . . . It has become an Annual Camp Meeting, between the two Circuits. For some time past it has excited great interest in the country for many miles round. Multitudes of people have annually assembled to spend a day in worshipping the God of their fathers, so that now this meeting is become very great, and thousands look up to it with increasing satisfaction. This Camp Meeting has yearly improved both in regard to the congregation and the Divine influence attending the various services; and this present meeting was great indeed, much exceeding any of the former. It was truly delightful to see the friends, between eight and nine o'clock in the morning, coming on foot, and in gigs, carts and waggons, in every direction, singing the praises of the most high God.—For some time we were employed in placing the waggons, gigs and carts (more than 50 in number), in a half circle form.—This being done, we placed the horses on the lee side, and

fixed the preaching stand in the centre, so that the congregation was half bound with a semi-circle of waggons, gigs, carts and horses.

A little after nine o'clock in the morning, we commenced with fervent prayer to Almighty God, a move went through the camp,—faith rose high, grace descended, and the feeling was great. The second sermon produced a very great effect. But afterward, during the morning, the preachers had to contend with a mighty force of the powers of darkness; yet the first going out in companies for prayer was very powerful. But the second seemed to open Heaven. In one of the companies, converting grace was poured out from on high, like a flood.—This company continued permanent, nearly to the close of the meeting; and, during the dinner hour, they went on in their work.

When the time was come to renew, generally, the afternoon services, it was considered proper to suspend preaching altogether, for some time, for the praying had become so powerful, and the influence so great, that the whole assembly appeared more or less affected. Accordingly the preachers all set to work in making large rings in different directions, among the congregations. These rings were made as large as possible, perhaps about 60 yards in circumference, that the mourners and praying people might not be crowded, and that order might be



1. Brinkworth Church and Assembly Room.
2. The Manse, Brinkworth. 3. Grittenham.
4. Callow Hill. 5. Minety.
6. Leigh. 7. Braydon.

preserved by giving all an opportunity of seeing every movement.

This plan worked well; as it brought into operation so mighty a force of prayer, and gave an opportunity to bring the mourners together. In these rings the preachers kept walking round exhorting the people; as also preventing the rings from being broken.

And now the meeting presented a scene, of all others the most delightful we ever beheld. It was thought that more than four thousand people were assembled together. Hundreds of pious people on their knees, pouring out their souls to God in mighty prayer. Scores of broken-hearted sinners, crying to God for mercy. Bursts of praises from the different companies, when mourners were set at liberty. Gentlemen and ladies on horseback, and sitting in their gigs with eyes bathed in tears. O! what a shower of grace descended!

Thus the work went on for about two hours; and then, after two short sermons, this glorious meeting was concluded, by singing with uncovered heads, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." From the time the converting work commenced, till it stopped, which was about two hours, we judge, we shall not exaggerate in the least in supposing that more than 50 precious souls obtained a sense of God's pardoning mercy, or were wholly sanctified. To God be everlasting Praise. Amen and Amen."

CHAPTER VIII.

The Story of the Churches.

AMONGST the Makers of the Circuit, and in the Making of the Circuit, it is to be remembered always, that even the members least widely known have played a part, and to the united life of the Circuit, every Society as a whole has been a contributor. In this chapter some account is given of the life of each society. It is necessarily brief, and in some points a hint only is afforded, but an attempt is at least made to give the main outlines of the story — local tradition will fill in the rest.

BRINKWORTH.

Mr. Heath's arrival at Brinkworth in 1824 caused a great stir, and some uproar, but no great amount of persecution raged. The stones carried to fling at the preachers were not flung, and save an occasional shot of rotten egg, insulting words and interruptions were the most formidable items the

missionaries had to encounter. It is on record, however, that James Whale, one of the earliest converts, was much persecuted, and as he stood at the street corners to preach, he was pelted with stones, eggs, mud, etc. Those who have heard Mr. Stephen Matthews describe the "coming of the preachers" to Brinkworth need no enlightenment. "Come and taste along with me, Glory! Glory! Glory!" was the invitation, and men flung down their scythes, covered up their pouches and rubbers, and off to the meeting. Charles Matthews, born 1757, and awakened under the second sermon that was preached, opened his house for Class and Prayer Meetings. Preaching services were held in many places; on the Green; in Abraham Young's carpenter's yard, at Hatherleys; and in a loft over a cart house just above the Manse; then regularly in a cottage near York Farm, which used to stand opposite the home of Mr. S. Matthews. One of the first homes for the preachers was that of Mr. W. J. Hitchcock's grandfather. The first Camp Meeting was held just above the present Manse, in a field called the Farm Hill. Prayer Meetings were held at one time in a Mr. Spencer's house, and beer was sold in one part of the house while prayer was ascending from the other. Beer and Bible, Pubs and Prayer Meetings, are unnatural alliances and "things were not very pleasant there, sometimes."

A Sunday School was early established, and Mr. Isaac Spencer was the first superintendent. It has flourished from the beginning. Of the men who "carried stones in their pockets to fling at the preachers," many were converted, two of whom became travelling preachers, viz., Aaron Sly and William Horsell, the latter of whom went out as such to Australia. The early local preachers included Joseph and Aaron Sly, James Horner, C., J., S., J., and R. Matthews, Abraham Cutts, Simon Waite, John Dixon, and Peter Ford.

A Chapel was built in 1828. For some years this had an earth, or mortar floor, and was stoned when money could be raised for the purpose—a number of working men leading the way **CHAPELS.** in this matter. The seats were forms—probably those still in use in the school-room. The first pews put in were of the old "horse box" type, and so there was no need for "Classrooms" in those days, the horse-boxes served the purpose admirably. This chapel cost £295, seated 230 people, and was opened with a debt of £235! The first minister's house, now the caretaker's, cost £192. A New Gallery was put in in 1839. The Jubilee Chapel was built in 1860. The Foundation Stones were laid on February 23rd by Mr. Jacob Humphries of Wootton Bassett, and the preacher was Rev. R. Davies of London. It was opened on August 12th, with Revs. Murray Wilson and R. Heys as preachers,

and £50 were raised that day. The cost of this chapel was £590 of which £450 remained as debt. It seats 260 people. With the cost of the Assembly Hall, 18th, caretaker's house and other improvements, the total has been raised to £980, on which only about £100 remains as debt at the present time. Repairs and modernising alterations in 1904 cost £325.

Because the foundations were so well laid in the past, the church has grown very solidly. At the present time it is in every way a worthy

THE OUTLOOK. monument to the work of the fathers, and bears creditably the honor that belongs to "the mother of us all."

Constant migration from the land often causes a decline in numbers, as at the present, but the *strength* of this church is great, and "good old Brinkworth" is the pride of the Circuit. The number and quality of its most influential "families" constitute a guarantee of strong life for the future.

BROAD TOWN.

This village has the honor of having the first chapel erected within the present Circuit, and the history of the church there is one of the brightest. The members of the Humphries' and Miles' families, and others in the earlier days labored magnificently together for the salvation of men, and brought the church to a high

state of efficiency. Among the first converts were Mary Hunt and Abraham Woodward. Thomas and David Hunt, John and James Bezzant, James Tuck, besides those named above, are remembered for their work in the past. They were not without

A DRINKING TABLE. persecution, as the account of a Revival thereat previously given, shows, and it is on record that at the Camp Meetings, a table was set up in the field, for a drinking bout, by the revellers, in the face of the preachers. At its greatest reach of power this church numbered as many as seventy-eight members, and for nearly half a century was a tower of strength to the Circuit. With over a hundred scholars, thirty-nine teachers, and fourteen local preachers in active service at one time its influence may be estimated. For a long period the "Broad Town Sunday School Plan" appeared on the Circuit Plan—presumably for others to learn therefrom. Its Day School and its Burial Ground added to its prestige. Its S. School was one of the first formed in the Circuit.

Its second chapel was built in 1842, at a cost of £236. In 1858 an end gallery was added "for the children during the public service." The stones of the present chapel were laid on June 13th, 1866. H. Tucker, Esq., a county magistrate, gave a suitable address thereat, and a donation of £10. The Opening Days were Dec. 13th and 16th, with Rev. C. T. Harris of Bristol, as special preacher. At the Tea Meeting

there were 300 present. The cost was £420, towards which £195 was raised—a good sum for those days. The old chapel is now used for Sunday School purposes. Recent renovations of chapel and school have cost over £90, and a debt of £50 remains on the premises at the present time.

To see Broad Town in power and might once more would rejoice the whole Circuit. Broad Town Primitives have been scattered all over the country and beyond the seas; the influence of this church rolls on in unseen paths. The way to triumph is the way our fathers trod. Let our friends

THE FUTURE take hold of the Sunday School, lay themselves out to capture and train the young life, and at the same time take up the work of reaching the large number of people who are careless and indifferent "outsiders"; base these works upon prayer and faith, and they will not only "hold the fort," as they now so bravely do, but will march to new victories. The Lord come down with power upon the Church!

WOOTTON BASSETT.

The Church here has been noted for the many-sidedness of its life and influence. After once getting well on to its feet, tho' it had a struggle to do so, it has run well. A long succession of men and women of influence made it for many years a centre of life to the Circuit, and in a considerable degree, to the

District. The names of Smith, Humphries, Tuck, Ind, Gantlett, Watts, Wallis, Strange, Hunt, Trow and others were well known, and some of them were names to conjure with. Though the ranks of the stalwarts are reduced in number, life and power still goes out to the surrounding villages, and will do yet more so, in the coming days, once again. With a suitable sanctuary, a solid body of members, an efficient band of office bearers, the Baptism of Fire is wanted, and the Glory of the Lord will be seen, and sinners will be converted—and the town needs it.

The first missionaries had to meet with great and violent opposition; persecution ran high. "Their glowing zeal and love could not be

THE BEGINNING. quenched, tho' they often had to bear the insults, rage and threats of unholy throngs in the streets." After a time they obtained a cottage for their services, and then took the "Long Room" of the old Royal Oak at £10 a year, in which a good work was done and many were converted.

This room being wanted for a ball room, it had to be vacated, and the church had to return to the little cottage. In 1831, two houses and a garden were bought on the present site; the houses were made into a chapel, and the garden behind was let. The purchase money was £10 and costs of alterations etc. brought this up to £160—£88 was the amount

borrowed on Mortgage. In spite of the possession of a chapel, however, the spiritual work PROGRESS was much supported by cottage prayer meetings, and many converts were won by house to house visitation, and in 1837, "Friend Preston" writes that "perhaps there are few societies which will surpass this in labours and travail." In 1839, during three months "forty have been converted and thirty added to the societies."

In 1838, the Foundation Stones of a new chapel were laid, and the old was pulled down. On Sunday, March 25th, the Foundation Sermons were preached. At 6 a.m., Hugh Bourne preached to the Sunday School; at 9-20, the town was processioned, prayers offered and short sermons preached; and at 10 o'clock, Sister West, of Frome, preached in the old chapel. At 1 o'clock, processioning as before; at 1-30, Sister Miles, of Broad Town, preached a powerful sermon on the ground; and Bro. Bourne preached after her. "This was a fine service." At night, "Sister West and Bro. Bourne" again preached; a powerful prayer meeting followed, and "three professed to be saved by grace through faith." Sunday, August 19th, was the "Opening Day," and this was the programme: 5-30 a.m., A BIG Procession with singing, to the chapel; PROGRAMME. 6 a.m., a Prayer Meeting; 9-30, Open Air Prayer Meeting at the top of the town, and then Procession to the chapel; 10 o'clock,

in the chapel, preacher "Bro. Heys"; 1-30, "met for processioning"; 2 p.m., sermon by Bro. Pope, from Bath; 5-15, Prayer Meeting in the chapel; 6 p.m., sermon by Bro. Foizey, of Stroud. Monday, somewhat similar proceedings. The first cost was £368, of which £245 remained as debt, which for a Society of thirty-three was heavy; the seating accommodation was for 263. Since then much has been added. In 1841, a gallery was put in for about £50; enlargement took place in 1859 at a cost of £500; and in 1901-2, a new screen at the entrance, communion rail, new organ and other alterations cost about £260. The vestry at the back is being considerably enlarged at the present time, and a site of land and cottages, with outlet to a side street has just been purchased which will afford every facility for the future. The seating accommodation of the chapel is 310, of the enlarged vestry about 120, and the total value of the property is about £1,200, with only a small debt.

Out of the burden of so heavy a debt at the opening of a new chapel, an improved method of raising money originated, which spread rapidly through the Circuit and then right through the Connexion—an immense boon to the whole of our church. Its value has been so great that it deserves a lengthened notice. The following is from the "Journal Notes" of Mr. Hugh Bonne. "When a chapel is opened, it is usual forthwith to drop all

further personal exertions, and trust to seat lettings and anniversary collections. And such was the case here. But happily Divine Providence awakened them for this A friend made them a donation of several collecting boxes.

When they had their old chapel, if three pounds were collected at an anniversary, they thought it excellent. But when their attention was awakened, they fixed their minds on raising **THE GOLDEN SYSTEM.** twenty pounds at the next anniversary. A number promptly came forward, gave in their names and engaged to raise the sums of money; some greater and some smaller, according to the circumstances and opportunities of each. The sums were to be raised by begging for the chapel, or given out of their own savings, or raised in such ways as Divine Providence should open before them. There was evidently a divine move The anniversary by this means reached a total of £26, which was a great boon. By the good hand of God upon them, their zeal, vigor and faith increased, and they pursued their noble course for another twelve months, and the anniversary of 1840 produced £45 16s. 6d. . . . Later, among the rest, a number of boys and girls gave in their names to raise five shillings each It cultivates the talents of the little people; for they have to study an agreeable address, and a nice behaviour. And in pressing their point, the children

tell people that it is a good cause; and they use the best words they can find." This was the beginning, but it was another illustration of "Behold how great a fire a little spark kindleth." At Highworth, Clack, Chiseldon, Brinkworth, Purton Stoke, Stratton, the system (variously described as The Wootton Bassett System, The Wootton Bassett Chapel System, The Golden System, The Golden Chapel System), was quickly introduced, and soon put a new complexion on the face of chapel debts; a way had been found, a providential way, of dealing with these monsters. Hugh Bourne was more impressed with its value the more he saw of it. He soon began to advise those seeking his counsel, to adopt The Wootton Bassett System. Next he wrote letters, prepaid, to where

he thought the information would be useful; then a regular budget of letters **EXTENSION.** was sent off to the Circuits, with a second edition; three thousand enlarged circulars were printed and distributed over the Connexion, and the magazines soon contained plentiful and glowing accounts of the successful introduction of the new system. Newcastle, Darlaston, Nantwich, Leeds, Dudley, Blackburn, Sunderland, etc., quickly adopted it and with gladness, and probably no part of our church failed to follow suit. Wherever debts were found, this system was taken up. It was inevitable that someone should say, "We have used this method before"; but documentary evidence fully sustains the emphatic statement of Mr. Bourne that

"It didn't open out as a system until it originated at Wootton Bassett." It remains a joyful fact for the Brinkworth Circuit in general and Wootton Bassett in particular, that it has thus been privileged to send forth a system that has made a way out of great financial difficulty for thousands of our churches, which is in constant use still, and likely to be as long as chapel debts are contracted and have to be destroyed.—*The Golden System.*

A further fact which Wootton Bassett and the Circuit remember with greatest pleasure, is that in Wootton Bassett the famous Pickett family lived. Coming here from Monckton near Winterbourne,

GIFTS TO THE CHURCH. Mr. Moses Pickett (led into the joy of pardon by a tract handed to him by Bro. William Rowles), and his excellent wife entered upon a life of great usefulness, and in the Wootton Bassett Sunday School and British School their family was educated, and led to membership in Christ by this church. The career of Mr. S. Pickett, of Leicester; Mrs. Moore (wife of Rev. B. Moore, of Stockport); Mrs. Barber (wife of Rev. — Barber, Australia); Rev. James Pickett, General Missionary Secretary; Rev. Hy. J. Pickett, of Northampton; and Rev. F. Pickett, of Plumstead, London, are watched and rejoiced in by the whole Circuit — another contribution to the Primitive Methodist church, of the highest value.

It remains for us to notice the Day Schools of Wootton Bassett, and the Town Mission thereof of 1870. The Day Schools were opened in 1842, at a cost for purchase and alterations of £400, and until 1858 were Primitive Methodist Day Schools, with regular supervision by Connexional Courts. At that date they became "British Schools," and

DAY SCHOOLS. Our church retains the right to use the schools for Sunday School purposes, and they are so used, cleaning and warming expenses only having to be paid. The first schoolmaster was Mr. Tuck, whom our people sent, or assisted in sending, to Borough Road Training College. Since then the following have been schoolmasters: 1858, William Bullock; 1866, William L. Williams; 1866, Richard Leigh; 1867, Henry Whittick; 1873, James Smith, who "has continued unto this day," and fills his post amidst great general regard and esteem for his ability and genial personality.

For a twelve-month, ending September 1870, a Town Mission was conducted by our church. At that date, probably the Circuit bogey—Economy, intervened, and it was abandoned. While it lasted, it did very good work, modelled on the lines of the "London City Mission." Miss Lloyd, a woman of experience and a devoted Christian worker, rendered great service. During twelve months 4,500 calls were made to homes, and nearly 600 sick visits were paid.

A number of people were led thereby to attend the House of God, and some were brought into the New Life in Christ, as a result of the Scripture Reading, Tract Distribution, etc., that constituted the work of the Missioner, and the Mission must have been a great blessing to the Town.

TOCKENHAM.

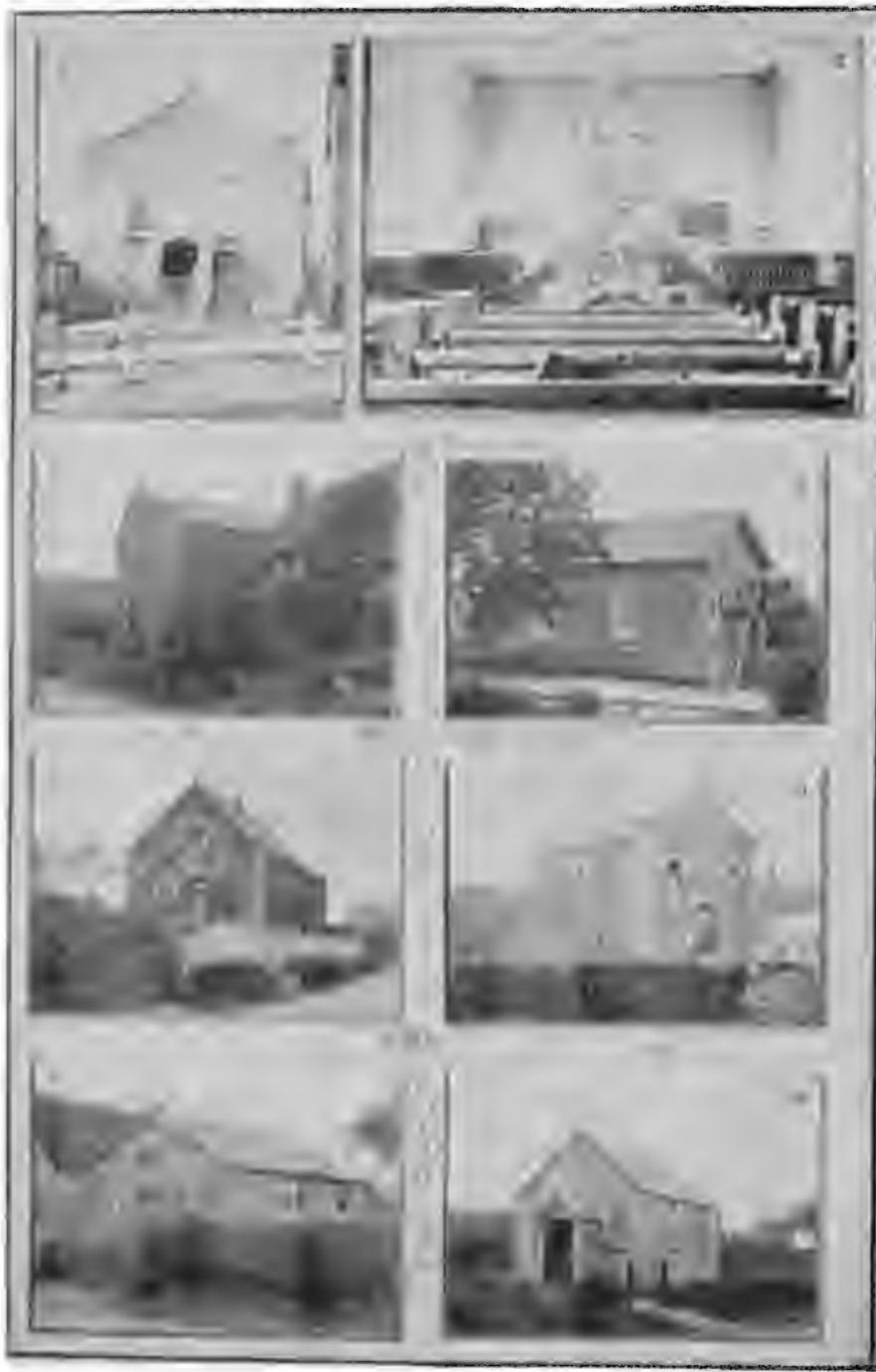
In this village "the fire burns always before the Lord." Having to struggle, like many other churches, for "a place for its feet," this has been done with dauntless vigour. On the Circuit Plan and in the Account Book, Tockenham and Grettenham are put together for many years, and the first separate report of Tockenham as to membership is dated March 1844. The members numbered nineteen, and a small separate quarterage was sent six months later. Prior to the erection of its chapel, the meetings were held in cottages, first at the Red Lion and The Tangle cottages, where large congregations were gathered. The first missionary is reported to have been the noted Joseph Sly, of Brinkworth. A feature of Tockenham Primitive Methodism was its powerful cottage Prayer Meetings, conducted in three or four separate places, and the constant and sturdy processions. The men of the past who made this church their home who are chiefly remembered STALWARTS. are James Smith, A. Simpkins, Jasper Hatter, David Little, John Clark, Richard Pickett, William Thomson, T. Hunt and

Thomas Young. Richard Matthews was the first S.S. superintendent, and Eli Holloway was super for thirty years. William Thomson, a farmer, was a noted local preacher of a very sturdy type, who used "to fight the Devil" in the pulpit while preaching. His grandson, Mr. W. H. Thomson, of our Newbury church, is one of the best Sunday School workers to be found "in a day's march." George Hatter, local preacher, man of prayer, saintly in life, and Eli Holloway, of like mind and spiritual influence, have left behind them most precious memories and inspiring examples. Thank God, others are ready to stand in their places, and the work continues, the fire burns on.

Land for a chapel was at length obtained, after many disappointed hopes and some unkept promises, and this chiefly by the aid of Mr. William Rumming, of Grittenham. The chapel was opened in 1863, at first cost of £180, which has since been increased to £280; the present debt is £20. The seating accommodation is for 120, and the chapel is well filled, the school well attended, and the church full of life and power. Of late years, the visits of Mrs. Hubbard, Evangelist, have been a great blessing to the neighbourhood.

GRITTENHAM.

Here we have "A Chapel in a Field," built as near to the old "preaching place in a cottage" as



1 & 2. Wootton Bassett.

3. Tockenham,
5. Winterbourne,
7. Hook

4. Bushton,
6. Lydiard,
8. Preston



1. Mr. M. PICKETT.
2. Mr. S. PICKETT.
3. Mrs. M. PICKETT.
4. Mr. FRANK PICKETT.
5. Rev. J. PICKETT.
6. Mrs. B. MOORE.
7. Mrs. BARBER.
8. Rev. H. J. PICKETT.
9. Rev. F. PICKETT.

possible. Services were held in this cottage, tenanted by Mr. W. Dixon, father of Robert Dixon, the present society steward, from time immemorial till the chapel was opened in 1894. For nearly forty years persistent attempts were made to secure land, but from Lady Holland, a Roman Catholic, the landowner, this was impossible. A site was at last obtained from the Powis Family. One curious result came from these efforts of our church, that is, a State Church School was built, and the vicar of Brinkworth promised to supply a curate to attend to these expressed religious needs. There were "jumpers" amongst us at Grittenham in those days, and a humorous proposal was made "to capture the Church Schools and turn them into a chapel." It was suggested that if the "jumpers" went to the services there and turned them into Primitive Methodist meetings, the parson would be frightened away, and our people could then apply for the vacant building. A fine scheme no doubt, and it at least kept up the spirits by giving something to joke about it. The building is a neat iron one, which cost £134, had £40 debt left at the opening, and is now debtless. The School dates from 1901, and is well attended. The families of W. Rummung, Gough and Collingbourne have well served this church in the past. Missionary meetings in the old cottage have been known to send up over £14 to the funds.

BRADENSTOKE.

—A struggle with Hyper-Calvinism.

Until recently (1902) this was planned as Clack, but the present one is the correct name for the place. It will be remembered that here was erected the third chapel in Wiltshire, in 1827. There were then twenty members in society, and this chapel cost £73, held 110 hearers, and had a debt at first of £40. The following items in the earliest account book are of

much interest. Land £2; beer for
ITEMS OF carters 2s.; beer at Barncis 2s. 1od.;
Cost. beer for the carpenter when making the
pulpit 1s. 6d.; beer at Emmets putting
in the floor 3s. 9d.; the boy, day's nip 3d.; beer for
house rearing 4s.; turnpikes' horse kip 3s.; ditto at
Seagry 2s. 6d.; do. Menots 5s.; do. Tenises 3s. 1od.
Like the first Brinkworth chapel this, too, had an
earthen floor until 1833, when boards were put down.
In 1887 a tastefully designed new chapel was built
to hold comfortably 150 people, at a cost of £522.
The debt of £205 left on this chapel was somewhat
of a burden and was only extinguished by the
unceasing dogged determination of Mr. James
Franklin and others, who in season and out of
season labored at this object. A glimpse at the past
is shown by the following from the pen of Mr.
Preston, in 1837. "I found a good chapel," he
writes, "but much behind in paying its interest, with
a thin congregation and no society. Persecution had
run very high here, but by the kind interference of

the clergyman it was suppressed. The work has revived somewhat and eleven fresh members have been added chiefly through the labors of Bro. James Franklin, who has been diligent in getting subscribers at a farthing a week; financial matters have improved." At the present day the society is still somewhat weak, but there are healthy signs for the future. At Bradenstoke it has been a severe struggle with Calvinism as well as open sinfulness, but this is the Day of Death to Calvinism, and Methodism is expecting victory in this place as elsewhere. May God save the people !

PURTON.

—“*Strong and of a Good Courage.*”

“From Little to Great” sums up the history of the church at Purton. One of the earliest places visited by our missionaries in 1824 or 1825, no way was found for the establishment of a church until 1829. The name appears in the account book for the first time in June 1828, with 8s. 7d. to its credit, and its first membership of twelve is reported a year later. Its progress was very slow for twenty years, and its members were apparently very poor. The erection of a chapel in a suitable situation, the OPEN-AIR present one, in 1856 marked the beginning of a new era. The first meetings CLASS MEETINGS. of the struggling and persecuted church were conducted under an elm tree in Witts' Lane, and there the Class Meetings were held

for some time. Then came services in Mr. Taylor's house in the Common; Mr. Thorne's house by the Station; a Carpenter's Shop owned by Thomas Stacey; back to a cottage again in the Common, and then a cottage was bought in "The Row," and turned into a chapel in 1843, at a cost of £123, two of the trustees being Robert and James Haskins. This chapel seated 120, but was in an out of the way place, and not much progress was made. At last a better opportunity came, and the church was alert and strong enough to take it. A cottage and garden were purchased at Mount Pleasant, on which was presently built a new chapel, 40 feet by 26 feet. The old chapel sold well, and considerably helped towards the erection of the new. This cost about £300, a half of which was raised at the time—a remarkable performance at that date. In the cottages, in the old chapel, and in the new, sinners were converted; the evangelistic spirit was ever present at Purton. In 1852, a writer states that "in contrast with twenty years ago, the moral condition of the village has improved. The village violence that I

MORAL ELEVATION. met with when I first travelled in this Circuit, 1832-33, has been subdued by the doctrines of the Cross, and now we worship in the open air without fear. Untiring zeal and beneficence have worked wonders in this and other villages in this circuit." Thus Rev. S. Turner, ever a keen observer. The opening of the new chapel was marked by a considerable improvement in all

directions ; "the congregation was nearly doubled, the seats being nearly all let, and sinners have been saved." A great enlargement of the building took place in 1893, at a cost of £450. This gave a little extra seating accommodation, and provided a much more roomy building, with school-room, class-rooms, etc., and much more beautiful too.

One of the first members was Mr. Thomas Embury, who was converted at Purton Stoke, and joined or helped to form the new society at Purton, and considerably helped to build it up.

VETERANS. Robert Goulding, still living and at the age of 92 still able to attend the means of grace, was a member at Purton Stoke for twelve years, and has been a member at Purton for the past fifty years, he has been a good helper. Among others well known to the present generation, who have now passed away, and in their day loved the cause, were Bros. Eatwell and Garlick, Bros. James Haskins, C. Gardner and S. Westmacott. These were "good Primitives." Mr. Westmacott was one of the strongest men in the Circuit. A profound theologian, a clear argumentative preacher, a sturdy fighter for righteousness, independent in action, and a friend both true and kind, he was "a man, a hiding place from the wind." Among those still living who have rendered conspicuous service, Mrs. Haskins, Mr. J. Sweeper and Rev. G. Fowler must be named. The first is and has been one of the most devoted and

useful Christians to be met with. For some time a local preacher, she has for many years worked as a Sunday School teacher, and in many other ways. "Wrapped up" in the Connexion, she has ever been one of its most loyal supporters. Mr. Sweeper removed to Purton from Wroughton about thirty-five or six years ago, and has been steadily growing in influence ever since. In reference to work, he may be called "The Ever Ready." His "share" of work for Christ has always been his utmost, but when that is done he counts himself as "an unprofitable servant." Working in ways too numerous to mention, he is above everything else "A Friend," and is most highly esteemed by the whole of the right-living people of the parish.

A sketch of Purton without special notice of Rev. G. Fowler would be very incomplete. This veteran minister is beloved by all to whom he still ministers so abundantly in the parish where he resides. From October 1st, 1853, the day REV. G. on which he first left home as a preacher, FOWLER. he had, up to July 1906, preached 13,557 times, not counting Missionary, Temperance, Chapel and Sunday School Anniversaries, which numbered not less than 1,443—a total of 15,000. During fifty-two years, he had attended every Circuit Quarterly Meeting of his Circuit, save one. In dealing with books, etc., he has been "a mighty salesman before the Lord," and is still busy. His works continue, his charity never fails.

The church at Purton is the largest in the Circuit, and so is its Sunday School, while it has local preachers to the number of fourteen. Its officers are experienced and able, and its contribution to Circuit strength is great in every way. Of slow growth, it has grown strong, and its best days are yet to come. Amen !

PURTON STOKE.

—A Majority Church.

One of the earliest places missioned, Purton Stoke has also been one of the most satisfactory fields of operation. The society was formed not earlier than 1830, and in February 1832 a site was obtained from Mr. Jonas Bathe and a chapel was built, the members numbering twenty-six. The building cost £160, only £10 of which was raised by the opening, and seated 84 people. It stood about opposite to the present Post Office at Purton Stoke. Unfortunately the heavy debt became a burden, and the members were unable to bear the expenses with any comfort. “But providentially Messrs Wm. and Jas. Rumney took a farm in the neighbourhood, and they felt

determined to see what could be done to
FRIENDS reduce the debt, and things began to
IN NEED. assume a different aspect.” In 1855 the
debt stood at £40, but at the anniversary
fifteen months later the debt was all paid off, and best
thanks were “given to Messrs W. and J. Rumney,
Messrs Clark, Hewer, R. Titcombe and A. Stephens,

and to all our friends who came up so nobly to the help of the Lord." The present chapel holds 140, and was opened in 1868. It cost £273, of which £98 was left as debt at the opening; it is now debtless.* In 1886 sanction was given to purchase land for school purposes, but this was only accomplished in 1905, at a cost of £24. Plans for a schoolroom are being prepared, which will give much needed facilities for the most valuable work that can be done at Purton Stoke, viz., the teaching and training of the young people. The work of this church has been much assisted by Mr. Rummung, of the Ponds Farm, and Mr. and Mrs. C. J. Iles, in the past, and at the present time, amongst many worthy ones, the Bros. J. and S. Titcombe hold a position of great influence and affection in the minds and hearts of the people.

A LEGACY. left a legacy of £30, a most useful help in the new building project. In conclusion, we note the remarkable fact that in a

* The building of this chapel was a high occasion. It is recorded that when a new public institution in Ireland was to be built, it was decided that the materials of the old building should be utilised in the erection of the new, and that the old building must not be pulled down till the new building was ready. At Purton Stoke this remarkable performance was not attempted, but the old chapel was pulled down, and the materials helped to build the new. To do this economically, the members undertook the work at the close of their ordinary day's toil. They still love to tell how the bricks of the old place came down, were loaded up, and with a whoop and a shout and a "glory", the "human horses" rushed them up the little hill on to the building site. If they were younger they would like to do it again, but fortunately real horses are plentiful to-day at "Stoke" and this will not be necessary.

population very widely scattered, and numbering at the outside some 250 people, three-fourths, a good majority, are worshippers in our church or attend the Sunday School. At Purton Stoke, ours is the "established" Church, but Free.

HOOK.

—Tribulation and Faith.

A Chapel was built at Hook sixty-seven years ago (1840), but was successfully, if not rightfully, claimed by the Lord of the manor, and at a valuation had to be handed over to him—a terrible blow to the church. This occupied the position of the present Police Station, and it is believed, is included in that building at the present time. Driven out, our people once more occupied a cottage—the one above the chapel, which was rented, a ceiling taken out, and so "a gallery" provided. A small iron chapel was built in 1886 and enlarged in 1889 at a cost of £91, on which no debt remains. Hook has done good work. Remarkable revivals have occurred there with

wide reaching results. It was at
MACEDONIAN PIPPINS. Hook that a poor woman, converted

in a meeting conducted by Rev. S. Turner, out of gratitude to God, consecrated the fruit of an apple tree to the support of the spread of the gospel of our church; and later we read that the sale of six of these apples, Macedonian Pippins as they were appropriately named, produced 7s. 6d. for the Funds. Nowadays

we have her spiritual followers in the Circuit who are consecrating calves, hens, honey, etc., to the Centenary Fund. Mrs. Harriet Barnes, a local preacher in the earlier days, greatly helped this society, and Mr. Chas. Price, a godly carpenter, was, until he died, a stalwart and able spiritual worker. This village, somewhat derelict materially, presents great difficulties, but Hook will live and labor on worthily for Christ.

LEIGH.

—A "Wayside" Community.

In no place has the work of our church produced a greater moral reformation than at Leigh. When our fathers began their work there at Gospel Oak in 1834, the morality of the people was very low. "The parish was noted for its thieves. They were punished as the law directed, but the evil continued, until the farmers despaired of keeping anything that could be carried away. Some notorious characters got converted, however, and the gospel destroyed the evil the law failed to remedy. The farmers, noting the effects, at once offered help in the erection of a chapel." In 1840 we find that the Gospel Oak services were held in a chapel which "belongs to Mr. Davenport, who allows us to preach in it free of expense." Leigh itself appears on the Plan first in April 1836, and in March 1837 Leigh and Gospel Oak (coupled together until the end of 1847) report twenty members. The first Connexional property there was

a one-storied "wattle and daub" cottage, in which
a good work was done and many
ONE-STORIED converted, purchased for about £5
COTTAGE. in the year 1859. Enlargements
and alterations turned this into a
chapel, which served for a few years until the present
building was erected in 1867, at a total cost of £233;
a debt of £98 left at that date has been extinguished.
Of those now deceased, the Young's, the Selby's and
the Curtis' are best remembered in honor for their
work's sake. Henry Curtis deserves a more extended
notice. In his unregenerate days he was "a terrible
fighting man," and after conversion he was the same
—though he fought now with spiritual weapons. His
conversion was on this wise: Summoned to the
Police Court for a slight offence, he was fined, but
feeling that the sentence was unjust, he went to gaol
rather than pay. In Devizes gaol he was converted;
in the dark cell the heavenly light came to his soul,
and henceforth he was a good soldier of Christ. "He
became a downright good man, looked up to by
everybody. He was very plain in his preaching, but
very earnest." The church to-day inherits the earnest
spirit of such men, and is full of promise.

ASHTON KEYNES.

—A Fortress Held.

Ashton Keynes is a beautiful village, watered by
the higher waters of the Thames, four miles west of
Cricklade, with a population in 1901 of 867. Our

church there consists of only nine members, with no Sunday School, and a chapel dating from 1839, well built, comfortable, and substantial, and with seating accommodation on gallery and floor of 155. It cost £239 of which £69 was raised at the time; and at that period there was a population in the village of 1,300, with our membership standing at nineteen. That reduced population is doubtless a chief cause of the many difficulties of our church. When the pillars of a church are taken away, or removed, with none left to fill the vacancy, the church must languish for a time, for living pillars require time to grow.

The name appeared on "The Plan" first in 1833, but our local missionaries were driven out by persecution; and failed to establish themselves until

A NOTABLE CONVERSION. 1837. The change came with the conversion of Miss Susan Saunders, who became a local preacher, enlisted the sympathy of her father for the infant church, and also his protection for the preachers. In 1837 he rented a house for us to preach in, and in 1838 had his own house licensed, and this was the preaching room till the chapel was opened, May 3rd, 1840. This was built by Mr. Staley, a builder who was in membership with us, on land bought by Mr. Saunders' son and given to us in lieu of a site his father had given before he died. Mr. Saunders was a large grazier and cattle dealer, a man of respect and influence, and his word and example

had considerable weight. He was buried in our burial ground at Wootton Bassett, amid a concourse of hundreds of people. Mr. Preston's notice concludes thus: "He had a wish for Primitive Methodism to be fully established at Ashton Keynes, and he left ground and twenty pounds towards a chapel. He had a great wish for all his children to be converted to God. Three of them are, and our prayer is that all may be saved of the Lord." In 1863 we read: "Primitive Methodism in this village has had almost every kind of opposition to contend with, and has had many fluctuations, so that about two years ago it seemed on the very verge of utter ruin, but a kind providence watched over it for good. At its lowest state, a family, the Westmacotts, all Primitives, were New providentially removed here, and they took a LIFE. lively interest in the cause. Great improvement occurred, and the church determined to make a desperate effort to put up a gallery, and a new inside to the chapel, outhouses, etc., at a cost of £60." It was a great time at the re-opening; a large public meeting was held, and amid great rejoicing it was announced that £42 10s. had been raised. "This was very largely due to the labors of our energetic secretary, Mr. Samuel Westmacott, who was heartily thanked for his services." The highest membership, thirty-one, was recorded in 1865, while it has been as low as three, and up to twenty-five since then. The cause of decline has been the same—removals. Until recently, it would seem as if a point as low as any

in its history had been reached, and the period 1888 to 1905 witnessed a sustained FLUCTUATIONS. struggle against difficulties and discouragements that is perhaps one of the most courageous in the history of the Circuit. Barely able to pay working expenses when all was done, the doors were kept open by the devoted loyalty of the Gingell family in particular, while Miss Darter is also one of the most loyal and true Primitive Methodists to be found anywhere. Battling with ill-health and the straightened circumstances that ill-health and a large family entailed, it is wonderful that Mr. and Mrs. Gingell, and in late years Mrs. Gingell and Miss Darter, alone as active members, were able to sustain the cause; and their work is worthy of the highest appreciation. The gospel ship at Ashton now sails in calmer seas, but even at its worst it showed a vitality that was remarkable—"it could not die for the life of it." The following are the main points in the present renaissance: Three years ago, and we fear for some long time before, the appointments at Ashton Keynes had been flagrantly neglected. At the September Quarterly Meeting the matter was brought up in a serious manner, and in response to a question, "Well, brethren, we all want to help Ashton; won't we all go when we're planned?" the preachers practically pledged themselves that Ashton Keynes "should be attended to." That pledge has been fairly kept, tho' not altogether, and the tide then began to turn. A valuable help came

to the Society when Mr. and Mrs. N. Phillips took a farm there, and then when Mr. P.

R.E-INFORCEMENT. Selby married and settled there. There is now frequently a congregation of forty, some young people

have been added to the church, a Y.P.S.C.E. is at work, the chapel has been renovated and some new seats put in; and Ashton Keynes will again become strong, and we hope in these changed times, lastingly strong. A forward movement must now take place, and a Sunday School if possible be established as the very best possible guarantee of a work of permanent value. Even as recently as twenty-five years ago Ashton Keynes, a beautiful village, was notorious for its moral delinquencies, and supplied more cases to the police courts than any other similar place around. It therefore needs Primitive Methodism, and needs it red hot, and plenty of it.

CRICKLADE.

—Triumph Postponed.

The ancient town of Cricklade is a town girdled in. Its fence is not a high wall, but a ring of unpurchaseable land. Therefore the town is cribbed and confined—extension is impossible. One result of this is the constant depletion of its young life; there is no room for them to settle. This in part explains the difficulties and slow progress of Free Church life therein; the youths and maidens of the Sunday Schools do not remain in sufficiently large numbers

to increase the work. Beside this, the town has been cursed by strong drink to a remarkable degree, and even to-day, the power of "The Drink" is far too great to be easily grappled with, and Temperance work is vexingly difficult even in the churches. There are also many "Charities," and much tribulation thereby. A low moral standard was manifest, and is none too high to-day. As previously stated, our fathers experienced rough and bitter persecution, and our history there from the beginning, instead of being one of steady growth to a position of

unquestioned strength, has been full of UPS AND "ups and downs." Genuine revivals of DOWNS. permanent value have occurred; Cricklade

at one time headed a "branch" of that name and promised well, but even to-day, while no one doubts the permanence of our position there, we have not the place and power we ought to have. The obstacles to be overcome ere that condition obtains are great (though this is not the place to chronicle them), but by no means insurmountable even in and by this generation. God has given many talents to our church there, and our prayer is that these may be focussed, and so become God's mighty instruments for the enlightenment of this town, from which the persecution of the righteous is not absent,

even to-day. In 1852, Rev. Samuel Turner 1852. writes: "Our cause at Cricklade had been low for years, for some years indeed the preaching had been withdrawn from the town, but in



1. Purton
3. Broad Town.
5. Broad Hinton Reading Desk.
7. Goatacre



2. Cricklade.
4. Ashton Keynes.
6. Purton Stoke.
8. Bradenstoke.



February 1851, some conversions took place and there was a marked increase of attention. Increased interest was manifested, the chapel became crowded, and then the converting work broke out fully. Meetings were held nearly every evening throughout the summer, and we have now fifty members." In confirmation of the former part of these statements we find a Quarterly Meeting resolution, June 1838, as follows: "That Bro. F. pay the rent of the Cricklade (preaching) house, and fetch the forms away," and the forms were subsequently sold to Wootton Bassett society for £2.

The first regular preaching place appears to have been the Independent Chapel (Noah's Ark), which was lost to us (in a way that is not revealed); then a long-room in Calcutt Street was occupied, and then the room now used for an Infants' School-room. At one time also the meetings were held in a chapel which had been built for the Wesleyans, but not used by them. In 1856 the present chapel, with 180 seats, was opened at a cost of £320, of which £210 remained as debt, but within a year it had to be recorded that the work "had sunk very low." A Revival Mission by Rev. G. Warner added twenty to the weakened society, and cheered the hearts of the A HELPER. faithful. In the erection of this chapel Mr. Ayers was a considerable help, and gave a donation of £30. In 1893 the chapel was re-seated, and a school-room erected at the back, at a

cost of £122, and in 1903 the chapel was renovated and a new organ put in at a cost of £110. The present debt is £60, the greater part of which it is hoped will disappear as a result of the Centenary Thanksgiving fund effort. These are works indicating no small zeal and no lack of beneficence.

In closing, it has to be said that no place in the Circuit is more on the heart of the ministers and officials of the Circuit, and it is earnestly hoped that the Cricklade church will be so blessed that she shall shine forth in beneficent works, with a strength that is equal to the position she occupies in an important town, and an important centre.

GOATACRE.

—Abiding in Strength.

Holding services here from the earliest period, our church was only able to build a home for itself in 1867. Primitive Methodists and Quakers or Friends have been in alliance from the beginning, and a true and typical Primitive Methodist always has a Quaker strain—his dependence upon the inner light is final. This alliance of spirit opened the way for us at Goatacre to the erection of a chapel. After years of wandering, as in other places, from cottage to cottage, Mrs. Blackman determined that, if possible, a permanent place should be secured. The friendship of Mrs. Harris, a Quaker lady, was enjoyed by Mrs. Blackman, and to her she appealed for assistance,

At the bottom of the village stood a "Friends Burial Ground," dated 1678, an enclosure used only for that purpose and similar to what is met

A PARABLE. with in many parts of the country.

A request for this was made; Mr. and Mrs. Harris argued the case amongst the Friends, and at last they were good enough to offer us the ground on a lease of sixty years at a nominal rent. Before the concession, one of the Friends came to see Mrs. Blackman, and delivered to her "The Parable of the Twigs." Showing to her a bundle of twigs, he pointed the strength of unity, and deprecated the setting up of another church in the parish, because it would weaken the whole church of Christ. The good Quaker forgot two things, of which Mrs. Blackman probably soon reminded him, viz.: the history of his own people, and the fact that our church had been set up for nearly forty years, had been wandering in the wilderness, and now sought a home. Strenuous efforts were at once made to raise funds, and in July 1867, the chapel, costing £135, of which £60 was then raised, was opened amid great rejoicing. A tablet in the chapel is inscribed thus: "In affectionate remembrance of Elizabeth, the beloved wife of James Blackman, of Goatacre, through whose persevering exertions this chapel was erected and opened July 19, 1867." Our church at Goatacre is most loyal and true. The means of grace are most highly valued and regularly used. Its week-night congregations are among the best in the Circuit. For years it has

been noted for its interest in missions—its “boxes” are old (some dating from the introduction of boxes) and well used, and in a church of about thirty members eight or nine pounds is raised every year. This warm hearted church welcomes all the servants of the Lord who labor there, and displays a true neighborliness in the village that shows them to be followers of the Lord. From the past we have the name of “Matthews,” “who used to do a lot of preaching,” taking long journeys, and returning as he used to say, “in a summer morning, just when the cocks were beginning to crow.” Mark Simpkins, another useful worker, was converted through the singing which he heard at a prayer meeting. A Y.P.S.C.E. is of recent formation and is helpful to the church work as a whole. Thy security is in the Lord !

N.B.—The plate on the wall, in the photograph of this chapel, is inscribed : “Friends’ Burial Ground, 1678.”

PRESTON.

—Sixty-six years in Cottages.

The little hamlet of Preston has always had some good Primitive Methodism in it, since the formation of the society in 1830. Until Nov. 8, 1906 its services had to be held in cottages—sixty-six years of cottage services ! To hold on so, spiritual tenacity has been forthcoming, success must have been enjoyed

and much self-denial practised. Mrs. Vines and Mrs. Clark have for a long period placed their cottages, for class meetings and preaching services, at the disposal of the church—glad to serve their Lord in this way. As opportunity has occurred, this church has had its Sunday School also, which at one time numbered as many as forty scholars. It is a pleasure to note that it was the desire to have a Sunday School which largely decided the question of the erection of the chapel last year.

Before Mr. Jas. Vines' conversion, long ago now, it was the custom of the farmers to pay the men their wages on Sunday morning. The men in turn went to Lyneham to pay their shop bills, then **SABBATH** to church (some of them), and then to **LIFE.** the public house to discuss the sermon.

To the converted man the Sabbath had another value than this, Mr. Vines refused to be paid any more on Sundays, and the whole practice was "put a stop to." He witnessed a good confession to the end.

The sale of a part of the estate last year gave opportunity for a site to be obtained. Mr. White, of Common Farm, Highworth, gave us the small site we required for the price of the Deeds; the members at Preston, every one of them, worked remarkably well in collecting money; Messrs F. Riddick (Sec.), A. R. Strange, and the ministers found a ready response in the Circuit, and on the date above given,

though the winds blew, the rains descended, and the floods came, the opening services were
A CHAPEL services of joy. The Rev. W. J. T.
AT LAST. Scruby at the stone-laying, and Rev. E. Parsons at the opening helped admirably, and a good rally of Circuit forces gave a financial success that destroyed all anxiety on that score. It is a small chapel, of course, just right for the hamlet, cost about £100, and has on it a debt of £10, which will soon disappear. The congregations are good, a Sunday School has been at once established, and in a place from which they cannot be moved, the church will continue its work of spiritual uplift as long as God requires them.

WINTERBOURNE.

—“*Beauty for Ashes.*”

Winterbourne has had its difficulties, and has felt them keenly. Here and at “Barrack” (Berwick Bassett) services were commenced in 1833, but only at the latter was a society formed, and Winterbourne was only on the plan for two quarters at that time. “Barwick” continued until the end of 1838, when we find “Barwick” and “Monckton” having services on alternate Sundays—at 10 and 2 in turn until 1840.

A NOBLE Mon(c)kton alone appears for eight years, and then Winterbourne is opened again
TRIO. with distinct services, and has continued so. Services were continued at Monkton until the end of 1854, when they were transferred

once more to Berwick Bassett. These two preaching places appear, now one, now the other, then together, and finally Monkton for some years alone, and the last service seems to have been planned at Monkton on October 15th, 1865. Winterbourne church was distinct, in its formation, but is to be regarded as the heir of "Barwick" and "Monckton." These three places, situated very close together, have shown remarkable vigor at various periods of their history, and have produced lasting and striking spiritual fruits, which fully justify the determined "holding on" to these places in difficult times. In 1854, the united membership of the three villages numbered eighty-one. Thence came the Bros. Eatwell, so long and honorably known for their good work in this Circuit, and that of Swindon. Here also was Moses Pickett converted (before he removed to Wootton Bassett) with his excellent wife, and from this place there went to Australia Mrs. Pickett's brother, Mr. Geo. James. His son, A. S. C. James, entered our ministry there, and is now one of the most influential Presbyterian ministers in Australia. *His* son also occupies a very promising position as a Presbyterian minister. This information is given by the Rev. J. Ashmead, of New South Wales, who is visiting his relatives, Mr. Maslin's family at Wootton Bassett, and who speaks from personal knowledge. He says that "Mr. James was one of the strongest men in New South Wales, and occupied a leading position there."

The last forty or fifty years has seen many difficulties; as W. Rowles told at the last anniversary it was a case of "We were turned out of there (a cottage), then we held services in Bro. S.'s cottage. He died, and we had to find another." They got one, then "the man died, and we were out again." Thus, from "pillar to post." Once a cottage, with garden, in which they worshipped was "bought," a sum of money was raised, but at the last, in spite of every effort, the owner refused to complete the transaction, and the money was banked or put out to use for many

years. However, it formed an excellent
A SITE AT nucleus when at last land was secured.

LAST. This occurred in 1903, through the generosity of Mr. Horton. He gave an excellent site, causing great joy to the church, and giving much pleasure to the Circuit. A fine rally has been made to put matters on a good financial basis, and a beautiful little chapel has been built at a total cost of a little over £300. It was opened in July 1904 by Miss Rumming, of Grittenham, Rev. W. C. Tonks being the preacher. £125 remained as debt, and this has been since reduced to £70. The church at Winterbourne worked admirably and gave well; they were therefore well-supported. It must not be forgotten that what placed the church in a condition to undertake the task, for them a great one, was the renewal of strength which came when Mr. J. Turner and his family removed thereto from Langford, in Berkshire. Red-hot Primitive Methodists are all this

family, and the church cannot sleep where they are. Their son has just completed a successful three years course at the Hartley College, and will soon enter upon what we trust will be, a useful ministerial life. Mrs. B. the wife of Captain B., was a very energetic lady belonging to the Established Church at Winterbourne. She has been known to meet timid women on the way to our cottage services, demand where they were going, and then to drive them back. She failed, of course, more than once. The sturdy ones told her to "get out of the way," they were going to chapel, and then she declared they were "made of the right stuff," while the sheep she shepherded to the church were "shams and hypocrites." It

A STORY. was Camp Meeting Sunday, and Mrs. B. determined there should not be a Camp Meeting if she could help it. She "talked" to her husband until he marched out to stop it. Mr. Edmund Belcher was planned to lead. The Captain made his demand that they should disperse, in unmistakeable terms. Bro. Belcher was about to give out the hymn —he changed the number. Looking the Captain in the eye he cried out:

"What a Captain we have got,
Is not ours a happy lot," etc.

The Captain talked, he got red, the folks surrounded him, and they sang away with right good will "What a Captain." The gallant Captain fled, and vowed he would never interfere with such people again, "not for anybody." Our people had a good time that day.

The church is well established now. Every branch of work is vigorously carried on, and in spite of a church atmosphere that is rather "strong," its influence around is great.

BUSHTON.

—*"By Common Consent."*

Our work at Bushton began with prayer meetings held at the Barton, and Mrs. Comley was the agent used to bring about the introduction of Primitive Methodism, while Bros. John Selby and Thomas Minchin, from Thornhill, helped to establish it. It may indeed be rightly regarded as an extension movement from Broad Town, via Thornhill. Next we find John Reeves, a zealous class leader, visiting Thomas Smith in his illness, and leading him into "liberty through Christ." This led to a mark of gratitude from Mr. Smith, who sold us a cottage, of which the inside walls and ceilings were taken out, and then it became a chapel—duly consecrated! This John Reeves, we are told was "a good man, class leader for a long period, and died at a good old age, full of faith."

The Barton or Barkton appears on the plan first in 1843, and Bushton six months later, and a society was established during the following quarter in each case. The cottage was purchased and made into a chapel in 1856-7. It cost £42 15s., and was paid for by "monthly instalments." This was made easy

because of the fact that the introduction of our church there was welcomed by all parties—
VILLAGE farmers, squire, and parson agreed with
UNITY. what was being done. Thus, in 1874, when the present chapel was erected, every farmer in the village helped with horses and waggons, and when, in 1894, the chapel was enlarged the same assistance was forthcoming. How admirable! This church, like every church of Christ, has had its difficulties, but these have not come from persecution or opposition from any other church.

The chapel is well situated, is one of the best in the Circuit for its size, and will soon be improved, it is hoped, by the addition of a large vestry. It has cost £307, had a debt at first of £162, but is now debtless.

The church suffered very severely a few years ago from "internal complaints," but Mr. W. Gough and his family sturdily continued to labour, hope and pray; the Circuit was sympathetic, and times have mended. There is now a good congregation, Sunday School and church, and its influence steadily increases.

LYDIARD.

—“*Bells on the Horses.*”

The people of the neighborhood of the present chapel were served by Primitive Methodism for thirty five years by services held at Hook and Greenhill. In 1828 there was a society at Greenhill of twenty-six

members, and services were planned there without a break, until 1849. For eleven years after that the place was closed against us, and Hook (and Purton perhaps) kept alive the interest at The Green and at Greenhill. In July 1860, preaching services recommenced at Greenhill, and were continued until 1867. Meanwhile a service had been commenced at The Green, or North Lydiard, January 1863 being planned for 1-30 p.m., and was held in the cottage of Mr. Stephen Gleed. Against opposition, and to the astonishment of everybody, land was secured by the strategy of Mr. T. Sheppard, of Purton, and a chapel was opened in November of the same year! What a stir there was! The Lord of the Manor, who was also the clergyman, attempted to do **A BATTLE.** what had been done at Hook—he tried to claim the property as his. The title proved to be good, and the land was ours. Weakness would perhaps have lost the day, but Rev. W. Hazell, Mr. Thos. Rummung and others were strong men, enjoyed the fight, and gained the battle. Rev. S. West preached "The Ground Sermons," and it was consecrated to Primitive Methodism. Opposition was strong, but friends stood by and "meant to win." The local brickmaker declined to sell bricks, he "would rather sell them to erect a public house," he said. He was not the only brickmaker; another lived at Wootton Bassett, and on a fine morning, Charles Carter, risking all things, marched to Mr. Thomas Rummings for the waggon to drive to Wootton

Bassett for the first load of bricks. Mr. Rumming, quiet but strong, knew what he was about, and his preparations fitted the occasion. The best waggon, the best horses, and bells on the horses; and away they went. Timid folks looked on, the whole place was awakened, could hardly believe it was true. "Charles Carter 'll get the sack!" "I don't care, we'll have a chapel," said he. The bricks came and were unloaded! A chapel was evidently to be built in defiance of "parson." True! "It was no trouble to get money," and £108 was raised by the opening day. The occasion suited the men. The posters appealed: "*Friends of righteousness and truth, come and help us,*" and they came. About 500 were at the tea meeting (tickets a shilling) at the stone-laying. Mr. S. Humphries gave £16 and a stirring address, while Rev. W. Hazell gave a veritable blast of defiance, and roundly declared that the opposition they had met with was unworthy of "gentlemen." Said he in ringing scorn, "As well put a black coat on a Neddy, and call him a gentleman." He conclusively urged that in education, in religion, in temperance work, the Nonconformists had laid the country under a debt of obligation to them, and that Primitive Methodists in particular had carried the gospel, in thousands of instances, to people who would not otherwise have heard it. He had a good time, and so did his hearers. The chapel opening took place on Nov. 8th, 1863; Revs. S. West, T. Powell and the Circuit ministers were there, and

hundreds of people; and to crown all Mr. MacKnight, the opposing clerical Lord of the Manor, himself gave a sovereign to the chapel funds.

We have now a full chapel and need one twice the size, in order to do our duty to the inhabitants, and some better school accommodation too. There is good reason to hope that efforts will soon be made in this direction, and that the young people of the present day will follow in the bold steps of their fathers. A large church and a large Sunday school give at once a call to this extension movement and a promise of success.

Of the older members Bros. J. Fisher and C. Carter have been members from the beginning, while Mr. J. Parsons and family have rendered solid support to the church and Circuit for a long period.

MINETY.

Minety-Moor sent 3s. 3d. to quarter day in 1844, though no members are reported. That was "in the beginning," and services were continued there for about five years. Minety had a period of "on" and "off" the plan for the next fourteen years, but in Jan. 1863 it was placed thereon, let us hope, "for ever." A small society of four was reported two years later, and the church has lived and done very good work now for forty-two years. At the opening of the chapel, Oct. 8th, 1865, it was stated that "services have been

held for several years in a cottage, in a barn, and even in the open air." The foundation stones were laid July 18th, 1865, by Mr. T. Knapp, of Startley, and Mr. T. Rumming, of Hook. The sermon was by Rev. T. Kench, and about 300 sat down to tea. The opening sermon was preached by Rev. S. Hooson; a large tea meeting was held, and £60 were raised.

A unique feature of the chapel building at Minety is to be found in the following: Three large annual camp meetings were held to raise money before the chapel was opened, and the Golden System was adopted at the same time for the same purpose, so there was "money in the bank" when the time came to build. The Rev. G. Fowler and Mrs. W. West unloaded the first load of bricks, and "it made their fingers sore." A good beginning, nevertheless, and our position to-day in Minety is good. Migration often saps the strength of the church as elsewhere, but it has good power in reserve, and revival follows decline. Mr. and Mrs. W. West and family, and Mr. and Mrs. Fry have done much good work here, and others will follow in their steps.

CALLOW HILL.

—“*A Chapel of Ease.*”

Callow Hill church is an offspring of Brinkworth and is in the same parish. From April 1870 to the opening of the chapel in October 1889, the services were held in a cottage. One of the writer's “warmest”

experiences was when he stood in this cottage just before the chapel opening, and preached to a crowded audience, standing very close to a big fire. Bro. Spencer said, "Bless the Lord, he (the preacher) is getting warm; he feels the fire." True! in a double sense.

The opening sermon was preached by Rev. J. Herridge, and the little chapel, costing £99, was opened, like Braydon, free of debt. The "father" of this society is Mr. Edwin Spencer. He was born in 1819, and converted in 1848, and became a local preacher in 1849. As class leader, society steward and local preacher, he has done well for the spiritual sustenance of the people. He still preaches occasionally, and is in his place at the services whenever possible.

The church is fairly strong, and earnestly labors in Sunday school and temperance work.

BRAYDON.

—“*Queen Street.*”

At Grittenham one asks “Where is the chapel?” At Braydon, standing at the chapel door, the question is “Where are the people?” There are few houses in sight, but though a widely scattered people, the “Braydon folk” know where the chapel is, and are very regular in attendance. The society was formed as a branch of the Brinkworth society, and was first

separately reported in March 1890. The first services were planned at Lydiard Plain, July 10th, 1881, and this became Braydon a few years later.

The site for the chapel was the gift of Mr. W. Iles, of Moonsleaze Farm, and the chapel was opened free of debt in 1889. It cost £109. The church is a healthy and vigorous one, though young, and is a great blessing to the people. The Wests and the Iles's have been great aids to this cause, up to the present time, and a vigorous C.E. society helps to make things live.

BROAD HINTON.

—“*After Eighty Years.*”

As before stated, Broad Hinton appears on the first plan of the fully constituted Brinkworth Circuit, a copy of which is given. The establishment of our cause here, however, was very difficult, on account of opposition and the impossibility of securing a permanent foothold in either cottage or chapel. For nearly forty years the village had been unmissioned by our church, until the spring of 1906. In the meantime, those who were at all Primitive Methodist in sympathies attended Winterbourne or Broad Town

services. In the early spring of 1906, a **REVIVAL.** fortnight's Revival Mission was conducted at Winterbourne by Miss Ricketts—a highly-esteemed evangelist. It was a great success, and she was invited to continue her work at

Broad Hinton, from which place many had attended her previous services. Mr. Hiscocks placed a large room at her disposal, he and Mr. Crees bearing the expense of the mission. A great work was done in the village, notable conversions occurred, a society of over twenty new members was formed, and a cottage let by Mr. Hiscocks at a small rental. This has been made very comfortable; the members have worked admirably to furnish it, and the church and Sunday school seem to be well established. Mr. Hiscocks has now given us the lease of a site of land at a nominal rental; and so, after eighty years, we have obtained this victory also. From the Centenary Fund, a contribution of £150 is to be made to aid in the erection of a Centenary Memorial chapel—and in no more fitting place, surely, could it be put. It will stand a good reminder of village victories.

The pulpit, or reading-desk—of which the photograph is given on page 152—served first for some years at Grittenham prior to the chapel opening. It was then lent to the Winterbourne preaching-house; then to Broad Hinton; and presently it must continue its honorable service elsewhere.

LYNEHAM.

—“*Shall the Last be First.*”

The church at Lyneham is the youngest in the Circuit, having been formed a year ago. Many years since occasional preaching services were held there,

and in John Cennick's time Lyneham was often mentioned as the scene of his labors. We, however, have never established ourselves there. Bradenstoke, Preston, Tockenham have afforded a little opportunity to earnest souls who *would* have the gospel, but the majority of the people in this beautiful village have been untouched by gospel preaching for a long time. With a great church influence and the land locked up, our fixture there has until recently seemed impossible. We now have a cottage service, and it is hoped that a site of land will soon be secured, and preparations made for the erection of a chapel.

It is worthy of remembrance, that on the green shown in the illustration, one of the largest and most influential Anti-Corn Law meetings was held,
at which Primitive Methodists
IN THE HUNGRY FORTIES. played an important part. Let
the Primitive Methodists of to-day
play an equally important and necessary part in giving the Bread of Life to the people. And the God of our fathers will be with us!

CHAPTER IX.

Conclusion.

ALL service ranks the same with God;
If now as formerly He trod
Paradise, His presence fills
Our earth; each only as God wills
Can work—God's puppets, best and worst
Are we: there is no last or first.

—*Browning*.

FOR complete victory, the Christian battle must ever be a soldier's battle! The Story of the Churches shows this in every case, either in reference to the past or the future. What waits to be done must be done by all, and not by one, nor two. The work of each must be that which God calls him to do, and which he *will* do at all costs. The names of individuals that are given, are of examples; and the call is not to admiration but that the example may be followed. The making of each church is in the hands of the individuals, for the victories of Christ are gained by the silent forces, by the contact of soul with soul—the leaven must leaven the lump. This individuality is not lacking. While there are those

whose first word is, "We've never done it this way before," there are others who wake up afresh every morning, are able to look at old things as if for the first time, and to act with no burden of tradition upon them. The only question with such is, "How can the work be done to-day," and if yesterday's plan is defective, they will find a new one. Such are the salt of their churches; their faith is ever fresh, their strength is ever being renewed.

There must be no fear of new methods of work. The governing idea must be to reach men, and having reached them, to save by the Christ within us. If auxiliary methods are needed, they must be used. The improvement of the mind is necessary to the improvement of the life, and mental culture is of interest to the churches of Christ; "Knowledge is power." Sociability is of the highest importance. In Christ men are brothers; and because men are fellow members of Christ, social barriers must not exist. The only "class" feeling is that which recognises men as good, better, or best in Christliness. It is life that tells, not possessions.

For the future, abiding in Christ, we can have no fear. The Circuit spirit is strong; the appeal for a "rally" never fails. When "a little one" calls, the Circuit comes "to the help of the Lord against the mighty" in that place, and the victory is His. It will not be forgotten that the "rally" is review day,

and of great value. Then the allies are side by side, the hosts of the Lord are seen, the individual is a part of an unconquerable whole; the voice of the prophet reaches men with "Thus saith the Lord," and the inner light glows with greater brightness. The class meeting "rally," the regular service "rally," as well as the larger "gatherings of the clans," are times of refreshing.

The elders of the churches, working through the years at their holy calling, filling their office with honor, will not forget to train young men to follow them. There should be no "one-man church" anywhere that it is avoidable. To make efficient preachers, teachers, workers generally, they have to be "caught young," as a rule, and the work of the church wrought into the texture of their daily labors. The call of to-day to the elders is: "Train your young people—equip them for the war." This can only be done by leading them into the battle and by putting the tasks upon them. Young people who are worth anything will gladly *do* things if led thereto by an elder beloved.

As "this country's ours," let it be possessed by Christ in us. The invitation "Come, sinners, come" is as necessary now as eighty years ago, and the call should find a fuller response. *Then* our fathers had a moral wilderness to deal with. *Now* there is the labor of the Sabbath school, and Band of Hope

worker to reap, and the harvest of the Lord should be greater. To win children is easier than to win reprobates, and the value is greater. Led to love Christ early, teaching and practice begun early, and a finer quality of harvest should be produced.

"And he gave some, apostles: and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints; for the work of the ministry; for the building up of the body of Christ; till we all come . . . unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

For the battle of the Lord in the villages, as elsewhere, we must have "the girdle of truth; the breast-plate of righteousness; the sandals of the gospel of peace; the shield of faith; the helmet of salvation; the sword of the spirit; with prayer and watching and perseverance"; and then He, our Captain, will win for Himself, through us, continual victory in the villages. Amen and Amen.

[FINIS.]



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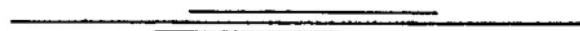


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